

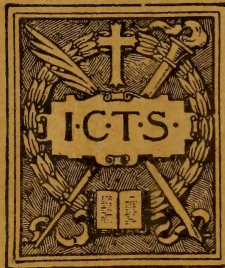
mp.
Relig.
Theol.
L

Is One Religion as Good as Another?

...Edited by...

REV. L. A. LAMBERT, LL. D.

Author of "Notes on Ingersoll," etc.



International Catholic Truth Society

ARBUCKLE BUILDING, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK CITY

1909.



INDIFFERENTISM

OR

IS ONE RELIGION AS GOOD
AS ANOTHER?

BY

REV. J. MacLAUGHLIN.

EDITED BY

REV. L. A. LAMBERT, LL. D.

Author of Notes on Ingersoll, etc.

55th Thousand.

International Catholic Truth Society

ARBUCKLE BUILDING, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK CITY

1909.

Nihil Obstat.

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.,

Censor.

Imprimatur.

JOHN M. FARLEY, D.D.,

Archbishop of New York.

(per R.L.)

New York, February 13, 1907.

Copyright, 1906,

BY THE

**CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION OF
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL,**

IN

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

PREFACE.

It is not without much misgiving that I offer this little book to the public. I am quite sensible of its many defects; and were it not that many friends have strongly recommended its publication, I should hardly have the courage to let it appear.

If my tiny effort, however, insignificant though it may be, have no other effect except that of inducing some able and learned ecclesiastic to take up the subject, and to deal with it fully and exhaustively, I shall not deem the time I have given to it unprofitably spent.

A portion of the book consists of a development of sermons or lectures delivered—on occasions separated by long intervals—on the points of doctrine which are treated in several of the chapters. The main part of it, however, was written in what I might term “snatches” between missions; and as those missions followed each other in pretty close succession, it was seldom that I had more than a week or a fortnight of consecutive time (rarely even so much) to devote to the work of writing.

I have not aimed at style: my chief object has been to bring to the point at issue arguments which might be found solid, clear, conclusive and convincing.

The arguments put forward apply to Christians

of all denominations who believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Some of them may reach the position even of those who, while they do not pretend to take the Bible for their guide, nevertheless profess as much belief in a Divine revelation of some kind as saves them from the imputation of utter unbelief or extreme Rationalism.

As the title indicates, my scope is to show that all religions are not equally right, that one only can be right, that all the rest must be wrong; and, having done this, then to point out that one which *alone* is right among the multitudinous claimants.

I cannot finish this Preface without expressing my most grateful acknowledgment to several illustrious personages and many kind and clever friends who have shown a deep interest in this tiny volume, ever since the intention of publishing it was first mentioned.

What I have written I confidently believe to be trustworthy, and in harmony with the constant teaching of the holy Catholic Church; nevertheless, I humbly and unreservedly submit everything contained in the book to the unerring judgment of the same holy Church.

Lastly, while vindicating the truth of the Catholic faith, and while disproving the claims of its antagonists and rivals, I shrink from the idea of saying anything in the tone of sarcasm, or irony, or disrespect; and I utterly disclaim all intention of indulging in personalities of any kind, even by the most distant allusions or insinuations.

JOHN MACLAUGHLIN.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	iii

CHAPTER I.

REFUTATION of Indifferentism from Reason, and from Reason enlightened by faith	7
---	---

CHAPTER II.

REFUTATION OF INDIFFERENTISM FROM REVELATION. INDIFFERENTISM shown to be a contradiction of Revel- ation from the words of the Great Apostolic Com- mission: "Going, teach . . . <i>teaching them to</i> <i>observe</i> ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU,"	15
---	----

CHAPTER III.

INDIFFERENTISM SHOWN TO BE A CONTRADICTION OF REVELATION FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CON- VERSION OF CORNELIUS THE CENTURIAN.— <i>Acts</i> x.,	26
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

INDIFFERENTISM SHOWN TO BE A CONTRADICTION OF REVELATION FROM THE HISTORY OF THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM.— <i>Acts</i> xv,	58
---	----

CHAPTER V.

FURTHER REFUTATION OF INDIFFERENTISM—REFU- TATION FROM ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALA- TIAN, CHAPTER I.,	69
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
THE KEY TO THE PROBLEM—LOVE OF TRUTH, AND FIRM BELIEF IN THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST . . .	86

CHAPTER VII.

INFALLIBILITY IN RELIGION	101
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

SHORT NOTES FROM HISTORY	125
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH	139
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND THE POPE'S INFALLIBILITY . . .	149
---	-----

CHAPTER I.

Refutation of Indifferentism from Reason, and from Reason enlightened by Faith.

ONE of the most popular and at the same time most pernicious theories about religion at the present day is the theory which teaches that a man may be indifferent to what Christian creed he belongs, provided he be a good man after his own fashion. This theory may be called by some Latitudinarianism, by others Liberalism in religion, by others, again, Indifferentism. Whatever name we give it, it means simply the doctrine that one religion is as good as another, or that all creeds are equally agreeable in the eyes of God. Its advocates say that God does not care what religion His creatures profess, provided they live up to it and act consistently with it. They contend that men may claim as large a measure of liberty in choosing their creed as in choosing their place of residence, or their family doctor. Instead of making religious belief a matter of duty they make it a matter of choice, taste, sentiment, or inclination. They act and speak and think, or at least affect to think, that while God holds up before men's minds certain doctrines which He commands to be believed, men are nevertheless free to put aside those doctrines and to choose others, *even contradictory ones*,

in their stead. Their reasoning, when analyzed, must force them inevitably to the conclusion that, although the voice of the God of everlasting truth has declared something to be true, they are at liberty to believe it to be false; and that while that same unerring voice proclaims some statement to be false, they, in the enjoyment of the fulness of their right of private judgment, are free to look upon it as true. Liberty of choice with regard to forms of Christian belief means nothing less than this.

Does this theory, which sophistry has made so plausible, deserve the popularity which it has attained, and which has given it such a hold on the mind of the multitude? No; so far from deserving the approbation, it does not deserve even the toleration of any reasonable man. Let us weigh it in the balance of truth. Let us look at it in the light of right reason and of Divine revelation, and we shall find that it contradicts at once both reason and revelation.

In this chapter we shall deal with it as a contradiction of reason.

God being what He is, the God of eternal truth, cannot be indifferent as to whether His people believe this particular creed or some other creed that contradicts it. To say that He does not care what form of Christianity they profess is equivalent to saying that He does not care whether they believe what is true or what is false. For the different creeds which now exist and press their claim to the homage of men, contradict each other; and contradict each other not merely in small items of belief, but even in doctrines

which are commonly looked upon as fundamental by those belonging to any Christian denomination. One Church teaches that Christ is truly, really, and substantially present in the sacrament of the Eucharist; another Church teaches that He is *not* truly present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. One Church teaches that the priest has power to forgive sins committed after baptism; another Church teaches that the priest has *not* power to forgive sins committed after baptism. One Church holds that the Pope has universal spiritual jurisdiction over the whole world, and that his utterances are infallible when he speaks on faith and morals in certain circumstances; other Churches maintain that the Pope has *not* universal spiritual jurisdiction over the whole world, and that his utterances are *not* infallible in those circumstances in which members of the Catholic communion say they are infallible.

Now, here are contradictory statements, and contradictory statements in matters of great moment—in doctrines which touch even the very foundations of faith. The voice of reason is peremptory and emphatic. It proclaims, in a tone that cannot be mistaken, that the creed which affirms these propositions, and the creed which denies them, cannot both be true. Two statements that contradict each other cannot both be true at once. One only can be true, the other must be false; and the evident truth of one establishes the evident falsehood of the other. To say, therefore, that God does not care whether His people profess this religion, or that other religion which is in contradictory opposition to it, is the same

as to say that He does not care whether they believe truth or falsehood.

Now, philosophy demonstrates that veracity is one of God's attributes. In virtue of this essential attribute God not only loves truth, but loves truth of necessity; and not only hates falsehood, but must bear an undying, an eternal hatred to it. And hence, to affirm that He leaves people free to believe what is true or what is false, as they choose, is a blasphemy against His attribute of essential truthfulness. The moment we affirm that one religion is as good as another, and that it is a matter of indifference with God what form of Christian belief men adopt, that moment we are hurried inevitably into the blasphemous conclusion that He is not more glorified by the profession of the doctrines which He Himself has revealed, than He is by the profession of those false theories of men which contradict them. If *He* has condescended to reveal one definite religion (and all professing Christians freely admit that He has done so), surely He cannot be indifferent whether that one definite religion which He has thus revealed be believed, or some other religion which is in open, palpable opposition to it.

This statement, which is clear enough in its bare enunciation, will become still more clear in the light of the following illustrations. We read in the Old Testament that when the Israelites, in their journey through the desert, had reached the wilderness of Sinai, the time was come when God was to make known the Ten Commandments, and to have a tabernacle and an ark constructed for His worship. It

was on that memorable occasion He revealed to Moses the precise plan according to which both tabernacle and ark were to be made. He was not content with describing the general dimensions, such as the length, the breadth, the height: He went down to the most minute details. He specified the particular kind of wood of which both were to be made—*i.e.*, Setim wood. He specified also the particular way in which they were to be overlaid with gold; and He added the other precious materials which were to be used in their decoration. No human architect could enter more minutely into details, in giving a design for some earthly structure, than the great Divine Architect did on that occasion, when there was question of giving the plan after which His ark and tabernacle were to be fashioned. And if He was so explicit in the directions He gave, it was simply because he meant to show that He would not leave any room for the promptings of man's imagination, fancy, or private judgment in the construction of those sacred appurtenances for His worship. Hence He charged Moses in words on which He laid all the emphasis His Divine Voice could command, to keep to and not to depart in the least item from the plan which had been revealed to him. "Look," He said, "and make it (the ark) according to the pattern which was shown thee in the mount" (*Exod.* xxv. 40).

Now let us suppose that as soon as Moses had gone down from the mountain he had begun to make the tabernacle and the ark, *not* according to the plan which had been divinely revealed to him, but according to a plan struck out of his own head, would God

have sanctioned the change? If Moses had departed from the pattern thus divinely shown to him in such minute, precise, definite detail, and had constructed tabernacle and ark according to the dictates of his own private judgment, God would not have recognized either as the thing which He had commanded to be made. And surely we cannot say that the God of infinite knowledge, of infinite wisdom, of eternal truth, is more concerned about the length and breadth of a material thing than about those momentous truths which go to build up the noble, majestic structure of His religion.

The intercourse of Moses with God on the mountain furnishes us with another illustration which is quite as much to the point. It directs our thoughts in the same channel. It was there that God gave to him those Ten Commandments which were to form the basis of all moral law. He directed him to make these Commandments known to the people. Such was the commission given to Moses, and such the message he was to announce. His work was marked out for him. He was not the maker of the law; he was but the medium through which it was to pass to the people. When he received those binding precepts from the hands of that great Sovereign Lord and Creator to whom man owes both the homage of the mind and the service of the body, he was not at liberty to put them aside, and give to the people precepts of his own making. He had no power to change the law, of which those precepts were the expression. He could not add to it; he could not take from it. He was bound to give it to the people as he himself

received it, in all its purity, integrity, and definiteness. On the other hand, similar obligations rested on the people as soon as the promulgation of those precepts reached them. When they heard them from the lips of Moses, who announced them in the name of God, whose representative he was, they were not free to depart from them, and to frame for themselves other precepts which would be more in harmony with their natural inclinations. No; there was the Divine code, there the expression of God's law for man, clear, distinct, definite; and man was bound to follow it, and forbidden to follow any that was at variance with it.

Now, Moses appeared in the Old Dispensation as the oracle of Divine Truth to those of whom he was the chief, as the medium of that partial revelation which God then vouchsafed to make to His people.

Jesus Christ appeared in the New Dispensation, when the fulness of time was come, to reveal additional doctrines to the world—doctrines immeasurably more important. And if those who lived in the centuries which intervened between the days of Moses and the Incarnation were obliged to adhere to the portion of revelation made to them through the lips of that Great Lawgiver, surely the people of the present Dispensation are as strictly obliged to embrace and adhere to that religion, when it has been enlarged, completed, and perfected by God's own Incarnate Son, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The foregoing arguments may be summed up in these two sentences: 1st, Right reason can never

sanction contradiction, and, therefore, can never sanction Indifferentism; 2nd, If God does not allow any change to be made in the plan He gives for the construction of a material sanctuary for His worship, it is against all reason to hold that He will allow any change to be made in the doctrines which teach in what His true worship consists—that is, in the truths He wishes to be believed and the laws He wishes to be obeyed.

CHAPTER II.

Refutation of Indifferentism from Revelation—Indifferentism a Contradiction of Revelation.

THIS theory of Indifferentism is a contradiction of Revelation. After His resurrection from the dead and before He ascended to His Father, our Divine Lord appeared on a mountain in Galilee. His Apostles were there to meet Him. His appearing on that particular mountain had been expected; it had been previously announced by Himself. It was natural it should be a meeting of special appointment. It was one of unequalled import. Its results were to sway the world to the end of time. The interests of the whole human race would be influenced by it.

It was there that our Divine Lord gave to His Apostles that great commission to which the world owes its conversion. "Going," He said to them, "teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20).

"Teach ye all nations," He said. What were they to teach? They were to teach the truths of His faith and the precepts of His law. And they were to teach all nations these self-same truths and precepts. He could not mean that, when they divided the earth into

those vast districts which were to be the spheres of their respective apostolates, one Apostle was to preach in one country that there was a sacrament in the Church by which the sins committed after baptism could be forgiven, and that another Apostle was to preach in another country that there was no such sacrament. He could not mean, when He thus sent them forth in His name, that He authorised some among them to announce that He was truly and really and substantially present in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and that He authorised others of them to preach the contradictory—*i.e.*, that He was *not* truly present in that sacrament. No; He left no room for the play of fancy, or the promptings of imagination, or the dictates of private judgment. He would have them understand—and understand beyond all manner of doubt—that as He was the One Only God, so there could be only one true religion which was the faithful expression of His Divine mind to His people. Being the God of truth, He would not allow man's error to be mixed up with His truth. He would permit no human authority to add to His doctrines; nor would He permit any human authority to diminish them.

Mark well the words He added, with such significance and such emphasis, when He gave His Apostles the great commission to teach world-wide. They call for special notice; for we must remember that they were pronounced by that same Voice which spoke to Moses on Sinai, when the great commission of promulgating the Ten Commandments was given him, and when the plan of the ark and the tabernacle

was shown him; and when God said to him: "Look and make it after the pattern that was shown thee on the mount." We must remember, too, that the Apostles and their successors had as little power to change the doctrines they were then commissioned to preach as Moses had to change the Ten Commandments, or to change the plan according to which the ark and the tabernacle were to be constructed. The words in question prove this to evidence. "Teaching them," He said, "to observe *ALL* things whatsoever I have commanded you." He did not say, Teaching them to observe this portion of what I have commanded you; nor did He say, Teaching them to observe that other portion of what I have commanded you; but He said, "Teaching them to observe *ALL things whatsoever* I have commanded you." "All things," whether in the domain of faith or in the domain of morals.

It was as if He had said, You are not to teach them that they may observe whatever they will take into their heads to observe, or whatever their individual preference or private judgment may dictate; nor are you to teach them that they may observe whatever *your* own private judgment dictates or *your* imagination prompts; but you are to teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you—these things and nothing else. You are to make them feel that they have no liberty of choice, that I will never tolerate the innovations of human opinion upon the doctrines which, through My Church, I teach, or upon the laws which, through her, I enforce.

May we not say that these words, "Teaching them

to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," without straining them in the least, without stretching them beyond their natural obvious import, are equivalent to a positive, absolute condemnation of the theory of Indifferentism? For, did not these words mean something definite and certain in the mind of our Lord? did He not intend them to mean something definite and certain in the minds of His Apostles? and did He not intend *by* them to empower and oblige His Apostles to convey that definite and certain "something" to the nations which they were to teach? But the argument gathers additional strength from the fact that when our Lord gave to His Apostles this great world-wide commission to teach, He knew well how much it would cost them to carry it out. Being God as well as man, the future lay as clear before Him as the past and the present. The stern, desperate opposition they must meet with—the sufferings, the humiliations, the privations they must endure in their long, laborious career, were all present to His mind when He spoke the words, "Going, teach all nations." He saw their scourgings, the prisons in which they would be chained, the days and nights they must pass in hunger, thirst, and cold. He saw, too, the violent deaths that were in store for them. And He saw all these things not in vague outline, but in all their terrible, revolting, and harrowing details. He saw the shipwrecks, the imprisonments, the cauldron of boiling oil, the flaying alive, the beheading, the crucifixion with head downwards. He knew well that their lives were to be lives of unceasing toil, pain, and contempt, and

that their deaths were to be the deaths of malefactors.

Yet these men were His own chosen ones. They were His dearest friends; they were the men nearly all of whom had been with Him throughout His public life—the men whom He loved with the fondest love of His sacred, loving Heart.

But how reconcile the love He bore them, and His clear foreknowledge of their life-long martyrdom, with the statement that He is quite indifferent what faith people hold, provided they act consistently with it? Would it not have been cruel on His part thus to doom His special servants, His dearest friends, to those lives of suffering and deaths of shame, if it were a matter of no consequence to Him whether His people worshipped Him according to this creed or that? If men, by acting consistently with whatever idea of religion they already held, became sufficiently acceptable to Him, why not leave them as they were, and save the Apostles from such trials in life and such torments in death?

Let them act up to the lights of nature—those lights gave them a certain notion of religion; that notion of it, though full of error, was for them as good as any other (according to the principles of our opponents) if their life was in harmony with it. Or, in case some fragment of definite positive revelation, through intercourse with the Jews, or through the promulgation of Christianity at Jerusalem, by chance reached them; let them use it according to casual or ordinary helps, and let further illumination, if deemed expedient, for some particularly privileged soul (like Cornelius) be vouchsafed by the ministry

of an angel. But why condemn an Apostle to a life of incessant pain and a death of unheard-of torment in order to bring to his fellow-men a message of salvation, if His fellow-men were free (in spite of every evidence of its truth) to accept that message or to reject it, or to accept a part and reject the rest, and could make themselves quite as agreeable to God *without* it as *with* it? Does not the fact of His giving that great commission to His Apostles prove that He meant them to convey to His people some definite message of revelation which His people could not know by any natural means? And does not His foresight of the storms of persecution they were to encounter, and the tremendous trials they were to undergo, show how extremely important He considered it that that message should reach them? Who can give *us* permission to treat as insignificant, or indifferent, a message, or the true meaning of a message, to which a God of infinite wisdom attached so much importance? None but Himself could give such permission, and He could not do so without defeating His own ends.

I can easily anticipate the argument that will spring to the lips of Indifferentists in answer to this reasoning. It is in vain, however, for them to urge it. The very comprehension of their system makes it powerless. They say that the Apostles were sent to teach and to preach, in order that men might know and believe in Christ, the Mediator, whose mediation or redemption was the leading idea, or the great fundamental truth, of the Gospel—a truth which men could not know by the light of reason, or by any revelation made heretofore to the Jews.

But the very men who say this comprise in their theory of liberal religion Socinians and Unitarians, who do not believe in the Divinity of Christ at all—do not believe in original sin—do not believe in Redemption—who reject all the mysteries of religion, from the very fact that they *are* mysteries, and that, therefore, reason cannot comprehend them. I mean they will tell us that the Socinian or Unitarian, who acts up to what his religion teaches, can quite as easily find favour in the eyes of God, and therefore quite as easily save his soul, as the man who professes the most detailed and most complete form of Christian belief; and that it is a matter of indifference to God whether a man chooses for his creed Unitarianism pure and simple, which absolutely denies the mystery of Redemption, or chooses some other form of religion which emphatically affirms that mystery as one of the most vital doctrines of Christianity.

The conclusion from such premises is clear; it must be this: that it was quite useless to put the Apostles to such trouble, to force them to lead a life of perpetual self-sacrifice, in announcing the doctrine of Redemption, since men, though living in a country where that doctrine is widely professed, clearly explained, sustained by sound and convincing proofs, are free to form and cling to a creed from which it is sedulously excluded; and while exercising such wide liberty in the choice of a creed, are doing an act which in itself is quite as acceptable in the eyes of God, and quite as apt to promote salvation, as would be the act of faith made by him whose creed contains with absolute certainty all those doctrines our Lord

referred to when He said to His Apostles: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

But there is another answer to this sophistry. On what grounds does the Indifferentist, or Latitudinarian, or advocate of any form of liberal religion, single out the mystery of Redemption, or any other isolated doctrine of Christianity, as *the* one for the promulgation of which *principally* the Apostles were to traverse the earth, spend their lives in toil, shed their blood, and die the martyr's death? Were not those Apostles as strictly bound to announce all the doctrines which that Redeemer taught as they were to announce the truth that HE was the Redeemer? Is not this evident from the words He Himself made use of when He gave them the world-wide commission: "Teaching them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you?" Was there anything in that commission to warrant them in believing that He gave them leave to class His doctrines under the heads of principal and subordinate, or to put forward some as of primary and others as of secondary importance? Did they not look upon everything that came from His lips as equally important and equally grave? Did they claim to have any share in formulating the creed they were to teach by choosing some of His precepts and rejecting others? Did they not know that to reject one iota of His revelation was to deny His authority altogether? And did not the same reasons which bound the people who were taught by the Apostles to believe some of Gospel truths bind them to believe *all* the Gospel

truths? What reason could there be for receiving part and for rejecting the rest? Why believe the Apostles credible up to a certain point and look upon them as totally unworthy of credence beyond that point? But, above all, why should the Apostles be sent to preach at all, if it mattered so little whether men believed or did not believe even those doctrines which are looked upon by most Christians as the leading fundamental doctrines of the Gospel? Must not then the preaching of the Apostles (in the theory of our opponents) be regarded as vain and meaningless?

Cardinal Newman, in his book entitled *Discussions and Arguments*, traces the sad issue to which this "marking out" or "singling out" of favourite doctrines leads. "Many," he says, "would fain discern one or two doctrines in the Scripture clearly, and no more; or some generalised form, yet not so much as a body of doctrine of any character. They consider that a certain message, consisting of one or two great and simple statements, makes up the whole of the Gospel, and that these are plainly in the Scriptures: accordingly, that he who holds and acts upon these is a Christian, and ought to be acknowledged by all to be such, for in holding these he holds all that is necessary. These statements they sometimes call the essentials, the peculiar doctrines, the leading ideas, the vital doctrines, the great truths of the Gospel; and all this sounds very well; but when we come to realise what is abstractedly so plausible, we are met by this insuperable difficulty, that no great number of persons agree together what are those great truths,

simple views, leading ideas, or peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. Some say that the doctrine of the Atonement is the leading idea; some the doctrine of spiritual influence; some that both together are the peculiar doctrines; some that love is all in all; some that the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ, and some that the resurrection from the dead; some that the announcement of the soul's immortality is, after all, the essence of the Gospel, and all that need be believed."

Then he shows that the Indifferentist, following out his principles of latitude, may, without any inconsistency, deny even the dogma of the Trinity; and that if that great fundamental mystery is put aside, mystery gradually disappears from the Christian creed altogether. He observes also that the Gospel under the destructive influence of Indifferentism becomes merely an equivalent for a new publication of the law of Nature. In other words, the Indifferentist, who believes himself a Christian because he professes this broad, undefined Christianity, is pretty much on a level with those who are entirely outside the pale of Christendom, whom no ray of revealed religion has ever yet reached—that is, as far as Divine faith is concerned, he is on a level with such. As to salvation, it may be said that his chances of being saved are less, since he rejects lights which to the heathen were never offered—unless, indeed, he be one of those in whose case good faith or invincible ignorance may plead in their behalf.

The inevitable results to which Latitudinarianism,

Indifferentism, Liberalism in religion, leads, could not be more beautifully or more accurately described than in the words of the great Cardinal which I have quoted, and which were written by him several years before he became a Catholic. To hold that every man's view of revealed religion is acceptable to God, if he acts up to it, that no one view is in itself better than another, is simply to reduce Christianity to a level with natural morality—to lead men on gradually, though it may be slowly, to the gulf of absolute unbelief. Now if a theory, the natural tendency of which is to lead to such lamentable consequences, is maintainable, then the preaching of the Gospel on the part of the Apostles, at the expense of health, happiness and life, was a work useless and foolish in the extreme. And if it was useless and foolish on the part of the Apostles to suffer so much in preaching the New Revelation, it was equally useless and foolish on the part of those faithful who have endured martyrdom to suffer so much in professing and practising what it taught. Why so many thousands living in the Catacombs, why so many thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheatre, why so many, throughout the history of the Church, imprisoned for life, burned or beheaded, hanged and quartered? Why might not these heroic souls have chosen some easy form of religion that would have saved them from such tremendous sacrifices, rather than that detailed, stern, inflexible one which cost them the loss of earthly goods, earthly happiness, and even their life?

CHAPTER III.

Indifferentism shown to be a Contradiction of Revelation from the history of Cornelius the Centurion.

THE tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles gives the narrative of the conversion of a man whose conversion may be regarded as an unanswerable refutation of the theory of Indifferentism. I refer to the conversion of Cornelius the Centurion.

The virtues this man practised before St. Peter saw him, the stern uprightness with which he had acted up to the lights hitherto received, the succession of miraculous circumstances which led to his conversion, make it clear to evidence that indifference in matters of religion cannot be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The history of his instruction, baptism, and reception into the Church occupies so large a space in the sacred text that it forms the whole of what is called the tenth chapter of the Acts. It looks as if the Holy Ghost had penned this lengthened description of this conversion that it might be a standing record to demolish the flimsy sophistry of those who advocate unrestricted liberty in the choice of a religious creed.

The good, moral, upright life Cornelius led before he was baptised by St. Peter, before he had even heard of St. Peter, corresponds with the picture drawn by those who hold that it does not matter what

creed a man follows, provided he be a good man after his own fashion. *He* surely reaches their standard; for *he* was *truly* a good man after his own fashion, and according to the lights he had received. He was a soldier, but an exceptionally virtuous one. He had a position in the Roman army. He was centurion of the band which was called the Italian band. So far as we can see, he was a man in pretty good circumstances, able to live comfortably. And, as to his moral character, it is described in the second verse of the chapter: "A religious man, and one that feared God with all his house—who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." In the language, then, of inspiration, he is declared to be a good man—to be a man who was full of the fear of God, of the love of God—one who spent long hours in prayer, and who divided his substance largely and generously with the poor—one, too, the power of whose example had been such that all the members of his household were influenced by it—walked in uprightness as he did, and practised similar virtues.

Now, what more was wanted? Was he not moving on securely to heaven in his present state? Would he not be sufficiently prepared for a place in heaven by continuing to live as he had lived hitherto? And if the good qualities which are ascribed to him, and the many and exalted virtues he is said to have practised, had been sufficient to qualify him for a place in heaven, why not leave him as he was? Perhaps he was following his present lights better than he would follow stronger and fuller illuminations, and corresponding with the graces he was actually receiving

more perfectly than he would correspond with more abundant ones. Why, then, not leave him as he was?—why take any further trouble with him? God, however, did not leave him as he was; *He* condescended to take further trouble with him, if I may be allowed that familiar way of expressing the idea. He sent an angel from heaven to Cornelius. And the angel, in the name of Him who sent him, commanded Cornelius to invite St. Peter, that St. Peter might come and instruct him and the members of his family as to what they must do. The angel was not content with giving a vague general command. He did not leave Cornelius in doubt as to where St. Peter was to be found. He told him that Peter was in the city of Joppe, described the quarter of the city in which he abode, and mentioned the very house in which he was staying. Cornelius promptly and gladly obeyed this message from heaven. He at once sent three men to Joppe to invite him to his house in Cesarea. As these three men were approaching Joppe, St. Peter himself had a vision. At the end of this vision, the Spirit of God said to him that three men stood at the door seeking him—that they had been divinely sent, and that he was to go with them whither they would lead him. The following day he set out for Cesarea, accompanied by the messengers who had come to invite him. And the morrow after he reached the house of the centurion, instructed him and the members of his household in the true Gospel, and received them into the one true Church.

Now, here the advocates of Indifferentism are on the horns of a dilemma. *One* of two conclusions they

are forced to draw—namely, either God sends His Apostles, and *even* His angels, on useless errands, or it cannot be a matter of indifference to Him what religion people profess. If Cornelius knew God, if he feared Him, if he loved Him—if he loved Him, too, in His poor by relieving those who were in distress—if he spent long hours in prayer, if his life was such that he was styled in inspired language a “just man,” why should God send an angel from heaven to him, or why should He send St. Peter from Joppe to Cesarea to bring to him the light of the new Gospel, to administer to him the sacrament of baptism, and to receive him and his family into the one true fold?

On the other hand, when St. Peter, as an Apostle of the new religion, stood in the presence of Cornelius, and put before him the doctrines of that religion, was he (Cornelius) free to keep any longer to the old form of worship in which he had served God for some time before, and to reject the doctrines which Peter had come expressly to announce to him? Or, was he free to accept some of those doctrines and to reject others? If he had hesitated, or if he had made it a condition of his being received into the Church, that he could go back to his own old religion after a time, in case he preferred to do so when he had given the new one a fair trial, and that he was to have the free exercise of his private judgment as to the meaning he was to attach to the Gospel truths, would St. Peter have admitted him into the fold of Christ? Certainly not. And above all, if after a visit from an angel of heaven—if while there stood in his pres-

ence an Apostle who had been divinely instructed in a vision to come to him—if while it was clear as noonday that it was God's will he should abandon his old religion and take to the new—if in spite of all this he had persisted in still clinging to the old one, saying that it was the one he had been most used to, at least for some time—that he did not ask for a better, that he did not care for novelties and changes, that he dreaded the wrench which such a change must bring with it, that he shrank from breaking with relations and friends, that he feared to incur their dislike, that he might lose his position in the Roman army, that such a step might reduce himself and his family to penury, and that in consequence of these many grave and well-founded fears, he had made up his mind to remain as he was—that he would keep in the old lines, pray as much as he had prayed before, give alms more abundantly still, and do good to all within his reach. Now, had he reasoned thus and acted thus, and remained in his old religion, while heaven's light flashed upon him with such overwhelming brightness, that he saw as clearly as he saw the sun in the heavens that it was wrong to remain in it any longer, would that old religion, and his many virtues, and his many prayers, and his abundant alms have availed him aught for heaven? No; God had now revealed to him the creed which He commanded him to embrace, and he, (Cornelius) was not free to put it aside and to follow some other creed instead. He might pray, he might profess to live in the fear of God, he might give all his substance to feed the poor—all would be in vain, unless he gave

up his old form of worship, which for *him* could no longer be right, and adhere to that new faith which God, through His Angel and His Apostle, had shown him to be the true one, and the only true one. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (*Heb. xi. 6*).

The application of this to current events is already implied, in the supposition I have made with regard to Cornelius, in the event of his having failed or neglected to take the course which he had the happiness to follow.

Before entering upon this application, I feel I ought to ask the reader's indulgence while I digress for a short time from the main line of argument. I have less hesitation in asking this permission, as the application itself, though it is a slight departure from the direct line of demonstration, embodies, nevertheless, a further refutation of the pernicious system against which I am arguing.

A man, belonging to some non-Catholic denomination, seeing the number of rich, respectable, educated people who leave the ranks of Protestantism and enter the Catholic Church, may become unhinged in the creed he has hitherto professed. He begins to have doubts, and serious ones, as to whether that creed is right or wrong. In spite of the prejudices generated by early education, in spite of those popular calumnies which taught him in his boyhood and early youth that any religion was better than the Catholic one—that all Churches were good enough, *except* the Catholic Church, he has, nevertheless, a sort of incipient, though reluctant, leaning towards

the faith which that Church teaches. Natural motives incline him to remain where he is; something abnormal within him (which he cannot explain to himself) impels him in another direction. He stands bewildered in the clash of so many antagonistic creeds; his reason tells him that all cannot be right, that only one can be right, and he is quite uncertain whether he belongs to the one which is right, or to one amongst the many that are wrong. He doubts more seriously every day.

Well, such a man either seeks to have his doubts cleared up or he does not. If he is sincerely anxious to find a solution of them, he will set the right way about it—*i.e.*, he will put himself to the trouble of inquiring, of reading, of consulting; he will pray with earnestness, and with his whole heart, for light from on high; and if he continue to pray earnestly and heartily for light, light is sure to come. The darkness of error and the mists of doubt will gradually disappear. No angel may be sent to him from Heaven, and no Apostle of the true faith may be divinely instructed on earth to come to him; but the light of reason and the light of revelation combined may show him—and show him so clearly that he can no longer have any rational doubt about the matter, that his present religion is wrong, and that the one he was taught in his younger years to ridicule and to hold in detestation is the right one, and the *only* right one.

The course he is bound to follow under these circumstances is evident. He is bound to take, energetically and promptly, the final step which will lead

him into that Church to which the steady light of faith is inviting him. The same grace which is a star to guide him is meant to be also a help to direct his steps in the path it traces out for him. Not to correspond with that grace, which is at once both light and strength, is to abuse it, and to abuse it is to run the risk of losing it for ever; for no man has control over the length of time he is to live, or the measure of grace he is to have; and the worst way to get grace in the future is to throw away the grace which is given in the present. I say he is bound to follow, promptly and energetically, the light which is made to shine upon him, and to use the strength which is divinely given him; for God does not give His supernatural helps in vain. When *He* communicates His lights and His strength, He expects, and He has a right to expect, that they will be used for the purpose for which they are bestowed; and He will demand at the judgment-seat a rigorous account from those who, through apathy, cowardice, or caprice, shut their eyes to His light, or waste those helps which are meant to strengthen them on the way to the true fold.

Such a man may pray a great deal, may perform acts of heroic penance; he may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, he may distribute all his goods to feed the poor, his portrait may hang in every drawing-room, his bust or statue may be found in every place of public resort, he may wield a wide influence amongst his fellow-men, he may have the good testimony of all who know him, he may be a useful, benevolent, beneficent member of society,

he may be the very ideal of a philanthropist, he may impress all who come in contact with him that he is a good man after his own fashion—all this will fail to save him, if he refuses or neglects to enter that Church which he sees in the irresistible light of faith to be the true one, and the only true one. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

This leads us to the further treatment of the second part of our supposition—*i.e.*, to consider in detail the position of the man who does not seek a solution of his doubts, and who strives to drown the voice of conscience by endeavouring to argue himself into the conviction that good works with any form of Christian belief are a sufficient qualification for the kingdom of heaven.

In spite of his efforts to stifle the voice of conviction, his doubts become more grave every day; for he cannot help noticing the stream of conversions which is constantly flowing into the Catholic Church. He observes that every year several men of standing, of great ability, of varied learning, leave the Protestant and embrace the Catholic communion. He understands perfectly well that they cannot be doing so from motives of self-interest. He has penetration enough to perceive that in taking such a step they have nothing to gain in a temporal point of view, but everything to lose. He has heard repeatedly that many of them made the change with the certain knowledge that they would lose in consequence their family inheritance, a rich living, an annual income, a lucrative business, a good situation, a means of livelihood—that they would be disowned and cast

off by their nearest and dearest relatives, have to break some of the fondest family ties, incur the displeasure of many cherished friends, and lose the respect of large numbers of old and highly-esteemed acquaintance.

He looks at some of the late prominent dignitaries of the Catholic Church in England, and he finds that the history of what they were in the not very distant past is still fresh in the memories of all. That contemporary history tells him that some of the greatest intellects that England has ever produced, that some of the brightest stars that ever shone in the English Protestant Church in this century abandoned her, and gave their life, genius, heart, soul, ^{and} ~~to~~ ^{the} another Church. That same history makes it clear to him that these great men did not give up Protestantism without counting the cost. Numberless difficulties stared them in the face—difficulties which would have appalled and unnerved men of less force of will, or would at least have made them try to find principles of expediency to baffle conviction. And souls less brave and hearts less courageous might have succumbed before getting even half-way over the dark waters that separate Protestantism from Catholicity. They had England at their feet while they remained members of the Establishment; on the other hand, they felt as if they themselves must ever sit at the feet of the humblest members of the priesthood of the communion they were embracing. The high places, to which the Catholic Church was in time to lift them, were still far below the horizon, could hardly be dreamt of (at least by themselves) as things

within the range of possibility. They could not foresee the glories which were to crown their courage, and make them shine as beacons in the Church of their adoption. The future they had to contemplate was, in an earthly point of view, dark beyond description. The loss for ever of the high place they had hitherto occupied—the loss of revenues, the loss, too, of the prestige with which fame had already invested their name as champions of the faith they had till then professed, the sacrifice of prospects which made the highest elevations in the Protestant hierarchy more than probable. On the other hand, nothing to look forward to in the Church to which they were submitting but a position of insignificance, crosses, humiliations, perpetual self-denial, and a life of comparative obscurity—such the contrast between the fascinations of the delightful life they were renouncing, and the stern rigours of the life of abnegation for which they girded themselves up, when they resolved to take the course in which unchanging conviction was irresistibly drawing them. They had all the merit of that heroic, self-sacrifice which they cheerfully embraced when they took the step which severed them for ever from the Church of their family, and which lodged them safely in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Our friend (who doubts) philosophises on the conversion of men such as I have been describing. He feels that nothing but the force of conviction, deep and irresistible, could have led them on in this course, could have made them brave such dangers and nerve them for such sacrifices. It occurs to him, too, that

if men of such undoubted uprightness, such ability, such learning—men who were so conversant with the question of religion, who were thoroughly qualified to compare the relative merits of different creeds, made up their minds in the face of such formidable obstacles to abjure the Church in which they had been brought up, and to make their submission to another—then other men of less ability, of less knowledge, and of fewer opportunities of judging, and who were brought up in the same Church, ought at least to doubt.

It may have been in reasoning of this kind that his own first doubts had their origin. And since the day when he first became unsettled in the creed of his family, the news of each successive notable conversion has tended to render his doubts more disquieting and more perplexing. He feels impelled to draw the conclusion that those great, able, learned, religious-minded men, who had so many motives to bind them to the Church of their birth and early years, would never have renounced her at the cost of such sacrifices, if they had believed that they could have saved their souls in the Church they were abandoning.

Such his doubts, such the facts that have generated them, such the reflections that have increased them. Still in *his* case they lead to no practical result. And it is his own fault that they do not. He can reason cleverly enough about the conversion of others, and speak eloquently about the conclusions which such conversions ought to incline people to draw. But, though he is full of uncertainties and perplexities himself, he takes no means to have them cleared up.

He is tossed about on the ocean of error, and he makes no effort whatever to get on the dry and firm land. Nor can it be argued, in extenuation of this culpable apathy, that he is ignorant of the dangers which surround his present position. He has no difficulty in realising the gravity of the point at issue. He knows that religion has to do with the soul, and that the soul is immortal—that with regard to himself it is a question of eternal life or eternal death; and that in reference to God it is a question of serving Him according to the form of worship He has prescribed, or some other form of worship at variance with the one on which He has set the seal of Divine sanction.

All this he fully understands; and he fully understands, moreover, the terrible consequences which must attend his want of decision. Though harassed by so many disquietudes and perplexities about matters of religion, he nevertheless enjoys a sort of lethargic peace of soul. While his conscience is oppressed by a multitude of doubts, he chooses practically to ignore them. And if his state of mind is analysed, it may be described in this form: "I have serious doubts as to the truth of the religion which I profess. I have reasons for thinking it is not the religion of Christ. I feel irresistibly drawn to another which I have been taught hitherto to despise and to hate. I am uncertain whether I am serving God in the right way or the wrong way; and although I am pretty sure I could find out for certain the religion in which He wishes me to serve Him if I made the effort, still I will give myself no trouble

about it. I know that I ought to inquire, but inquiry is irksome and inconvenient, and if once begun and followed up it may show me the necessity of making changes from the very thought of which I shrink with horror. Many good men, who are as much bound to inquire as I am, hold that it is a matter of no consequence what form of Christian belief a man professes, provided he be a man of good works. I will remain as I am. I will keep to the creed I was brought up in. I will do as much in the way of good works as I can. I will lead as good a life as possible. And, as to matters of faith, I will take my chance." This may not be recognised as expressing the state of mind of a certain class of Indifferentists, but I think it will be generally admitted that it expresses the state of mind of many.

Now here we are engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with our opponents. The defenders of the system of indifferentism, if true to their principles, will hold that this man is quite secure as far as religion is concerned, that he is a good man after his own fashion, and that he has nothing whatever to fear in regard to the world to come.

I maintain that such a man cannot possibly be a good man in *God's* sense of the word "good" so long as he remains willfully and apathetically in the state of doubt in which he is living at present. He lacks the very foundation of supernatural goodness—*i.e.*, that firm, unswerving faith, without which no superstructure of supernatural virtue can be raised. His faith, shifting like the sands of the beach, is equivalent to no faith at all. It means everything and it

means nothing; for it means nothing *definite*. In the secret of his heart he sets more value on a creed to which he is supposed to be antagonistic than he does on the one which he professes. And yet he has not the courage or strength of will to enter upon a search after the solution of his doubts. Self-interest, human respect, craven fear, downright apathy, sheer indifference, prevent him from doing so. The things of time absorb nearly all his attention; he has none to give to the settlement of the question on which his eternal state depends. While he willingly takes an immense deal of trouble in arranging the affairs of his house, of his family, of his business, in seeking after the situation, occupation, or work which brings the largest wage, in attending to an infinity of trifles, he takes no trouble at all (although he is harassed by constant misgivings about the matter) to assure himself whether he is doing rightly or wrongly that greatest and most important of all duties—the duty he was sent into the world to do—the duty of serving God. “Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is all man” (*Ecclesiastes* xii. 13). Is there evidence of this fear of God in the man who attaches so little importance to God’s service that he does not care whether he is serving Him in the way that He approves of, or in a way that He condemns?

Does not the first precept of the Decalogue forbid not only the worship of false gods, but also the worship of the *true God* in a way that is false? On what foundation then can that man rest the confident hope of being eternally saved who has good reason to believe that he is not worshipping his Creator in the

way He has revealed, but according to a bundle of erroneous doctrines and empty rites which have had their origin in the pride and obstinate opinionativeness of novelty-seeking men? Is God likely to give heaven to those who will not condescend to inquire which is the road that leads to it? No. Heaven is the greatest reward which His omnipotence can bestow. He will *never* give it to the man who doubts seriously whether he is walking in the way that leads towards it or the way that leads *away from* it, and who does not think it worth his while to make inquiries, though he has easy and ample opportunities of doing so. If it still be urged that he is a good man after his own fashion, I answer, that may be; but he is not a good man after *God's fashion*, and on that everything depends. That moral goodness which God demands as a qualification for heaven can never be found in the soul which is oscillating (entirely through its own fault) in vague, perpetual uncertainty, or which is deliberately stifling doubts, instead of continuing to inquire with a view to finding a solution of them.

Hence, I hold that the very terms in which the theory of Indifferentism is enunciated are sophistical—at least, if it is a question of a man into whose mind has come a reasonable suspicion that he is wrong. For that system supposes something *as proved* which is *not* proved, which never *can* be proved, for the simple reason that it is an impossibility. It supposes that a man *can* be a good man, *even* according to the Divine standard of goodness, although he is in constant wilful doubt whether he

is offering to God a worship which is agreeable to Him, or a worship which He must disown and reject. And *can* that great God, who is just and holy and true, ever look upon as good the man who lives day by day in grave doubt, in sheer indifference, whether he is glorifying Him by believing what is true, or insulting Him by professing a creed which he has a good reason to believe may be false? God is the God of truth. He must of necessity love truth; and by the same law of His Divine being, He must bear an everlasting and unchanging hatred to what is contrary thereto.

The striking words of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in reference to this are in place here. Alluding to a kindred subject (*i.e.*, “ Rationalism the legitimate consequence of private judgment ”), he says: “ Greater things than argument are at stake—the honour of our Lord and the eternal salvation of souls. How great is the dishonour, of which men think so little; as if truth were a sort of coin, that they may stamp and change, and vary its die and fix its value, and make it in metal or paper as they will! They treat the truth as one of the elements of human barter, or as an indulgence which a man may hold and use for himself alone, leaving his neighbour to perish. This is truth to me; look you to what you believe. What dishonour is this to the person of our Lord? Picture to yourselves this night upon your knees the throne of the Son of God; cherubim and seraphim adoring the glory of Eternal Truth, the changeless light of the Incarnate Word, yesterday, to-day, and for ever the same; the heavenly

court replenished with the illumination of God, the glorified intelligences, in whose pure spirit the thought of falsehood is hateful as the thought of sin; then look to earth on those whom the blood of Christ hath redeemed; look on those who in this world should have inherited the faith; look at their controversies, their disputes, their doubts, their misery; and in the midst of all these wandering, sinning, perishing souls, look at those who stand by in selfish, cold complacency, wrapping themselves in their own opinion, and saying, 'This is truth to me.' Think, too, of the souls that perish. How many are brought into the very gulf of eternal death through uncertainty? How, as every pastor can tell you, souls are torn from the hand which would save them by being sedulously taught that the deadliest sins have no sin in them; by the specious and poisonous insinuation that sin has no moral quality; how souls have first been sapped in their faith as Satan began in Paradise. 'Yea, hath God said?' that is, God hath not said. This is perpetually at this hour going on around us: and whence comes it? Because men have cast down the Divine authority, and have substituted in its place the authority of men, that is, of each man for himself" (*Grounds of Faith*, pp. 84, 85).

I now return to the argument drawn from the conversion of the centurion: and I return to it to answer an objection.

I am well aware that the patrons of Indifferentism will appeal to a certain portion of the chapter (*Acts x.*) as containing a vindication of their theory. They

quote the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth verses as a clear and explicit defence of it. In these verses we find St. Peter, after hearing from the lips of Cornelius an account of the wonderful way in which he had been visited by an angel, and commanded to send for him, giving expression to his thankful admiration of God's loving providence in leading pure-minded men into the true Church. These verses run thus: "And Peter opening his mouth said: In very deed I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh justice, is acceptable to Him" (*Acts* x. 34, 35).

Now, the supporters of Indifferentism, looking at these words quite apart from the context and from the exceptional circumstances in which they were spoken, seem to think that they warrant almost any conclusion; and they have no scruple in drawing a very broad one. They say (at least some of them say) that it is evident, from this emphatic declaration of the Apostle, that God does not care what a man is, in point of religion—that He is quite indifferent whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, a Pagan, or a Turk, a Protestant, a Ritualist, or even a Catholic (if you will), provided he be an honest, straightforward, benevolent, charitable man.

Let us see if there is anything in the verses in question to justify this bold reasoning. Can these words of St. Peter be construed, even by the most subtle understanding of them, into a vindication of the theory of Indifferentism? No, certainly not. For, quite apart from their true meaning, as made evident by the context, the very circumstances even,

in which they were spoken, embody an unanswerable refutation of any such theory. If God were indifferent as to what form of worship His creatures paid Him, then St. Peter's visit on that occasion to Cornelius was useless—his long journey of more than a day from Joppe to Cesarea was useless—the journey of the three men who travelled so far to invite him was useless—the coming of the angel from heaven was useless—the truths Peter announced to him were useless, and would have served the purpose quite as well if they had been but a repetition of the old doctrines of the Synagogue, or a rehearsal of those fragments of revelation which were already familiar to Cornelius—the baptism was useless, an idle ceremony which might have been very conveniently replaced by some of the old rites of the Jewish ceremonial. In such a supposition these long journeys and the consequent fatigue, the preparatory instructions given to the centurion and his family before reception into the Church, the performance of the sacred functions by which they were made members of the Church—all this might have been dispensed with; and so all parties might have been spared a great deal of unnecessary trouble. But can we conceive a God of infinite wisdom going beyond the lines of His ordinary providence, working great miracles, employing so many intermediate agents—servants, Apostles, angels—to lead a man who was already acceptable to Him to a knowledge of a certain definite creed, if He cared so little about matters of faith as the advocates of Indifferentism would have us believe? Is not the secret why these propagandists of

broad Christianity give to the passage in question so free and wide an interpretation patent to every reasonable man who thoughtfully investigates the matter? Is it not this? They would have it that God must be indifferent about religion, just because *they* are disposed to be indifferent about it themselves. They paint Him, not according to the dictates of intimate conviction, but according to the bent of natural inclination; and they cling to Indifferentism as a creed, not because they believe it is one which is calculated to give Him glory, but because it is one that is suited to their own convenience. It presupposes little restraint; still, quite as much as they are disposed to bear. It is an excuse for a religion, while it leaves them free to believe what they like, and, with regard to many points, perhaps to do what they like. In point of convenience, there is nothing that has the resemblance of a Christian creed that can be compared with it. It saves people from the reproach of being absolute unbelievers, while it gives them unlimited latitude both as to articles of faith and as to the laws of moral conduct. In fact it may be said to be diluted idolatry; for those who profess it make God not what He is, but what they wish Him to be—that is, as careless and indifferent about His religion as the most careless and indifferent amongst His creatures.

But now having considered the circumstances in which the words were spoken, let us sift the meaning of the words themselves. “In very deed,” said St. Peter, “I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth Him

and worketh justice is acceptable to Him." The real meaning is evidently this. 1st. That God does not exclude the Gentiles from the gifts of faith and of grace, and that He is as willing to receive Gentiles as Jews into His Church. 2nd. That while He is free to give or to withhold from men the gifts of His grace, which are quite gratuitous, He at the same time has no regard for a man's race, or lineage, or pedigree, or country, or nationality, when there is question of the distribution of those gifts; in other words, that the being a member of a particular race, or a native of a particular country, is not demanded by Him as a prerequisite for becoming acceptable to Him, or for finding favour in His eyes. 3rd. That if a man knows God and fears Him, and leads a just life according to the supernatural lights which are given him, and does the works of justice with the aid of Divine grace, according to his present knowledge of religion, while he is yet in invincible ignorance that there is any other religion which is true, or, at all events, that there is any other which is better than his own, and if he is in such a frame of mind that in case it were made evident to him that his old religion can be no longer right for *him*, he would be quite willing to abandon it, and quite willing, on the other hand, to embrace another as soon as he became absolutely certain it was the Divine Will he should do so—then such a man, whether he was born in Judea or Galilee, or in some heathen land, like Job, shall find favour with God.

This *must* be the meaning of Peter's words, for it is evident Cornelius himself is the ideal Peter is

describing. He (Peter) is contemplating a man whose circumstances in regard to religion, whose tone of mind, and whose dispositions of heart resembled those of the centurion. And hence the widest conclusion that must be drawn from his words is, that God looks with favour on those who live in holy fear and lead a just life according to their lights, as Cornelius did, and who, having no knowledge of a better way of serving Him at present, are ready to adopt a new and a higher form of worship as soon as it is His good pleasure to reveal it to them. It is to people who act up to their lights in this way St. Thomas alludes when he teaches that it is to be held as *most certain* that God will either, by some interior inspiration, reveal to them what is necessary for salvation, or will send them some preacher of the faith, as He sent St. Peter to Cornelius, rather than let them perish through want of faith. He was treating the case of a man who lives in a place where none of the ordinary or natural means of attaining to a knowledge of Divine revelation are to be found. The conversion of Cornelius is, indeed, a striking illustration of the truth of the teaching of this great doctor of the Church.

But the meaning of the verses in question will become still more clear if we look at the matter from another point of view. Suppose that St. Peter, as soon as he reached Cesarea, perceived that Cornelius, in the short interval between the vision of the angel and his own arrival at his house, had changed his mind again, and had begun to resist God's will though it had been so clearly manifested to him;

and suppose that he declared to Peter that although he knew with absolute certainty the religion he came to announce to him was now the only true one—that it was the Divine will he should embrace it at *once*, and that it was wrong for him to follow the old one any longer—still, having regard to the tremendous temporal difficulties which for a man in his position stood in the way, he could not think of making the sacrifices which such a step demanded. Would St. Peter, in such a supposition, have spoken words which implied that he (Cornelius) was there and then acceptable to God? Every reasonable man must answer, No; for although Cornelius had been (or in case he had been) in the Divine favour till then—till the hour came when there was question of corresponding with or rejecting the signal grace then offered, he would have sinned the moment he wilfully and persistently rejected it. And his sin would have been the particularly great sin of the man who, while heaven's light was shining upon him with its brightest rays to show him what was false on one side and what was true on the other, chose falsehood in preference to truth, and did so from motives of self-interest, and in open resistance to God's will.

Till the apparition of the angel, or a little before, Cornelius, though knowing the one true God, and having implicit faith in Christ the Mediator, had been living in invincible ignorance that there was a higher and a holier religion than that which he was practising; but that ignorance had begun now to be vincible. The announcement that the promulgation of the Gospel of Christ had been made at Jeru-

saalem on the day of Pentecost was spreading widely. It had already reached several cities of the Roman provinces, and Cornelius had probably heard tidings of it from the Jews with whom he associated at Cesarea. At all events, that Gospel had now been promulgated to himself personally in a manner so wonderful and so miraculous that there was no longer room for any doubt. Had he turned a deaf ear to the truths it announced and the laws it imposed, he would have sinned, and lost by his sin the grace he had hitherto possessed, or the favour of God, in whose eyes he had till then been acceptable.

Our opponents are not disconcerted. They hold that the conversion of Cornelius, and the arguments we have drawn from it, do not weaken their position in the least. Although Cornelius knew the true God, they observe, still he had not explicit faith in Christ the Mediator; nor had he been as yet instructed in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But *we*, they urge, are Christians, and *as* such we believe those great and broad truths on which Christianity is built. We hold, however, that within the limits of those broad and wide fundamental truths, it is lawful to construct several different creeds, and creeds, too, which on many points contradict each other.

This reasoning carries with it its own refutation. That the sophistry it contains may be more thoroughly exposed and our answer to it appear in clearer light, we must look again at some of the doctrines on which the principal Christian creeds differ, and at the same time keep before our minds the momen-

tous importance of those doctrines. These creeds differ on the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, on the doctrine of sacramental confession, on the question of the Pope's jurisdiction. They also differ as to whether there is a voice on earth which is infallible when it speaks on certain matters in certain given circumstances. Now, surely it is a matter of importance whether Christ is or is not truly and really present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, whether confession is or is not the ordinary means instituted by Christ for obtaining forgiveness of the sins committed after baptism, whether the Supreme Pontiff has or has *not* universal spiritual jurisdiction over the whole world, and whether he is or is *not* infallible when he speaks in his character of universal teacher on matters of faith and morals. Could there be doctrines which affect the interests of men's souls more deeply than these? With this question we proceed to answer the statement of the Indifferentist: that within the limits of the broad and wide fundamental truths on which Christianity is built it is lawful to construct different creeds, which on many points contradict each other.

What is Christianity? Christianity is the religion taught by Christ.

Now, the religion taught by Christ was one in its beginning, it has been one ever since, and it must ever remain one to the end of time. It cannot be two. It cannot differ from itself; if it could, it would not be Christ's. As there is only one true Baptism, says St. Paul, one true Saviour, one true God and Father of all, so there can be only one true

faith. "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all" (*Ephes.* iv. 3-6). In other words, Christianity, as it signifies the religion revealed by Christ, means truth. For Christ is the God of truth, who cannot speak a lie. And truth is one—it is something pure and simple. It is not a compound consisting of various elements, some of which are true and others false. It can admit no alloy of falsehood without losing its essence, without ceasing to be what it is. Light and darkness cannot co-exist; heat and cold cannot be found in the same place at the same time. Falsehood and truth cannot be built together on Christ, who, as the God of truth, is the foundation on which His religion rests. To affirm, then, that, within the broad limits of Christianity, different contradictory creeds, may be lawfully built up, is simply to affirm that Christ's religion may mean truth and falsehood at once—may be a mixture of what is true and what is false; and that Christ Himself meant it to be such. But was not that religion true in all its parts when Christ delivered it to His Apostles, to be propagated throughout the world? And was it not true in all its parts when His Apostles transmitted it to their successors? And was it not that it might remain true in all its parts to the end of time, that He promised to send His Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to teach all truth; and promised to be with His Church Himself all days even to the consummation of the world?

Could He mean, when He revealed those doctrines which were to constitute Christianity, that He left men free to give them contradictory forms according as fancy or inclination prompted? Had even the Apostles themselves any power to change them, or to leave people free to believe their opposites, as they thought fit? And if the Apostles, to whose guardianship they were committed could not change them in the least item, how does it appear that any innovator who has come into the world since their day, has had any authority to take such liberty with them? What passage is there in the whole range of Scripture from Genesis to the Apocalypse—what has there been handed down in tradition—what is there in the dictates of right reason to justify the assumption that Christ meant to leave people free to draw contradictory creeds out of the religion which He revealed? Does not everything in Scripture, in tradition, in reason, point the other way? No one has ever heard, that He said at any time, that if men believed the unity of God, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption, they might be free about all the other dogmas of His revelation.

But, quite independently of reasoning of this kind, the statement of the Indifferentists is refuted from the very words in which it is made. It leads to conclusions the most absurd. To say that, within the limits of the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, there is room for different creeds, and creeds which on many points contradict each other, is hardly anything less than contradiction in terms. For if such liberty is allowed, Christianity can never have

any limits at all. In other words, while the theory of Indifferentism may be said to have certain limits to begin with, it has none whatever to end with. It can be expanded to any degree its upholder wishes, be stretched out indefinitely, and be made to mean anything and everything, or nothing, according to men's whims, fancies, caprices and private judgment. There is no restrictive or restraining element in it to check its course. It is necessarily progressive, changeful, variable. Freedom of opinion is its principle of life; and freedom of opinion has never recognised any limits in the past, nor is there any hope it will ever recognise any in the future. The only sphere in which it finds itself at home is illimitable space. There is no anchor to keep it within fixed distance. It is like a puny boat, unfastened from its moorings, swept over the ocean by the rage of the tempest, without steersman, without rudder, without chart, at the mercy of every wind and wave.

Here is the secret why the religion of the Reformation has been divided, and subdivided, and re-sub-divided into numberless sects. It claimed the right of liberty of opinion, of individual preference; it repudiated the idea of being bound to obey any controlling or authoritative voice that could keep it within definite lines. Hence, its doctrines, like circles on the water, became wider and wider as time went on. These doctrines are expanding still every day; and it is not unreasonable to say that the only thing that will put an end to their constant expansion will be the day of general judgment.

But perhaps we shall be told that even in the

Catholic Church, which boasts of being so clear and definite in her teachings, liberty of opinion with regard to certain matters of doctrine is allowed, and that in all such matters members of her communion may hold different and even contradictory views. Why, then, condemn in another Church what we approve in our own? Is it not unfair to deny to others a right which we, to a certain extent, make use of ourselves? What is the difference, ask our opponents, between our system and that followed by the Catholic Church? Is it not this, that while *she* marks off the limits of liberty of opinion at a certain point, we make those limits a little wider? She gives a certain amount of latitude, we give a little more. The difference, therefore, is a difference, *not* of kind, but of degree.

We shall not seek to evade the difficulty. We shall meet it fairly, face to face. And we say at once that it is not a difference of degree, but an essential difference of principle between the Catholic and non-Catholic Churches. Catholics recognise the infallible voice of the Church as the divinely established means of securing unity in faith, by fixing the limits of free thought and necessary faith. But non-Catholics sanction the right of private judgment, which is a principle not of unity, but of division and diversity. We readily admit that there are certain things in which the Catholic Church allows her children liberty of opinion. But the very lines within which she circumscribes that liberty may be regarded as an additional, though an implicit, proof of her truthfulness. She marks out clearly the limits up to

which liberty may go, beyond which it must *never* go. "Thus far," she says to her children, "you may go in the exercise of freedom of opinion, but no farther."

She defines, too, with equal clearness, the sphere within which necessary faith is demanded, and demanded under penalties of the gravest kind. And so authoritative is her voice, and so distinctly does she draw the lines that mark the boundaries both of liberty and of obligation, that if one of her own children persistently held that there was no liberty of belief were she granted it, she would cease to regard him as a member of her communion, and would brand him at once with the mark of heresy. Nor would she be less stern in pronouncing upon him the sentence of excommunication if he obstinately refused to submit his understanding to any of those great and distinctly revealed truths which she binds her members, under pain of heresy, to believe.

Surely there is a great difference between a religion which is secured by bulwarks such as these against the assaults of Rationalism, and a religion which, I may say, consists of nothing else but Rationalism, which is made up of those favourite doctrines which free inquiry, guided by tastes and inclinations, leads a man to choose as his formula of belief. Wide, indeed, is the distance that separates the man who belongs to a Church which, under penalties such as I have named, demands submission to her teachings, from the man who makes his own fancy and caprice the only measure of his faith and the only standard of his morality.

The Church of Christ makes religion something clear, distinct, definite; Indifferentism makes it something so vague and so variable, that it reduces it to nothing. That Church, pointing to her teachings, says to her children: "These are the doctrines which I, in Christ's name, declare have been divinely revealed. These you are bound to believe. In whatever else there may be liberty of opinion, there can be no liberty here."

The system of Indifferentism, on the contrary, authorises its disciples to look through the whole series of Christian creeds, just as they would look through the range of stalls at a bazaar; gives them full freedom to patronise the one which most commends itself to their taste—with the additional privilege of giving it up when they get tired of it, and of patronising some other in preference when fancy, family connection, matrimonial alliance, self-interest, greater convenience, or anything else whatsoever, inclines them to do so.

The Church of Christ makes religion consist in God's unchanging revelation; Indifferentism makes it consist in man's ever-changing opinion. The Church of Christ insists on belief in one definite creed; Indifferentism sanctions the holding of as many antagonistic creeds as there are men who hold antagonistic opinions. Which system has the stronger claim to be judged true?

CHAPTER IV.

Refutation of Indifferentism from the History of the Council of Jerusalem.

THE Apostles realised fully that they were bound to guard with zealous care the sacred deposit of faith which had been committed to their keeping. They knew with infallible certainty that that faith was true—true in substance and true in detail. It had come from the lips of Him who was the Fountain of all truth. They could not allow even the least element of falsehood to be mixed up with it.

They had not been long engaged in the ministry of preaching when they had an opportunity of showing their zeal in protecting it against innovation. The Church was still in her infancy when the voice of error made itself heard, and sought to destroy her young life. Proud, obstinate men arose who resisted the Apostles, disputed with them, questioned, and even in some points denied, the truth of their teaching. These restless innovators maintained loudly and defiantly that the Gentile converts could not be saved, unless they superadded the observances of the Mosaical Law to those of the New Gospel, and that Judaism was a necessary intermediate step from Paganism to Christianity. St. Paul opposed these positions with all his energy. Peter, James, and John held the same doctrine. The question was one of great moment. The zealots for the Law were

moving heaven and earth to carry their point, *i.e.*, to make submission to legal prescriptions a necessary qualification for a Gentile's becoming a Christian. It was a critical time in the life of the Church. The Apostles found themselves placed in circumstances of exceptional difficulty: they must either allow some little falsehood to be mingled with the truths of the Gospel, or they must condemn such falsehood, and condemn it by a public act, which would have the effect of changing into the bitterest enemies of the Church some who had hitherto been most zealous in extending her sway and in propagating her doctrines. They foresaw clearly enough the consequences of such public condemnation. A storm of persecution, which the Church, yet young and according to human appearances ill able to bear, was sure to follow. Not merely in Jerusalem and Judea, but in the other Roman provinces—indeed, in every part of the world where Jews were found, it would create bitter and persistent opposition. Perhaps those Jews might prevail so far with the Roman authorities as to induce them to prohibit entirely the further preaching of the New Faith.

Such were the difficulties the Apostles had to contend against—such the dangers they had to encounter. Yet they did not hesitate; they could not allow the Gospel of which they were the appointed guardians to be corrupted, changed, or added to. Compromise in things so sacred was out of the question. There could be no communication between light and darkness; truth and error could not live together in the Church of their Divine Master. They must preserve

the deposit of faith pure, integral, incorrupt, unmixed with even the least leaven of falsehood. Though all earth and hell should rage against the rising Church, they must condemn error, condemn it publicly; and condemn it not merely separately and individually, each Apostle by himself—they must condemn it with unanimous voice when met together in sacred council. They were to put on record a public act which would show the people of future time that there was one Gospel, and one only—that it could not change without ceasing to be what it was in the beginning. And the example they were thus to set in the very dawn of Christianity was to be a standing record throughout all generations how error was to be treated—how the Gospel of Christ could never bear the innovations of human opinion—how that Gospel, pure, intact, unchanged, as it came from the lips of its Divine Author, was the one to be transmitted to succeeding ages, and not some other gospel that was more or less at variance with it.

Though it was inconvenient at the time to hold a council, yet a council was held. It was the first ever convoked in the Church. All the Apostles who could be present took part in it. Some were far away in distant lands teaching and preaching; one, St. James the Greater, had already received the crown of martyrdom. Peter, James the Less, and John, Paul and Barnabas were there. Peter, as prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ, first Pope, opened the council and presided throughout. The doctrines and observances which the innovators sought to introduce were examined, discussed and condemned. All

agreed that such doctrines were irreconcilable with the Gospel of their Divine Master. The parting words which that Divine Master had spoken on the day of His Ascension were still fresh in their memories and still sounding in their ears: "Going, teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And the Holy Ghost, who had been promised to the Church, who had already come down into her, and who was to dwell in her to the end of time, was with them to suggest to them all truth. He guided them in their mode of acting, inspired their deliberations, placed the matter in clear light before them, swayed their decision, and left no room for doubt as to the course they must follow. They knew with infallible certainty that the Mosaical prescriptions were not amongst the things which their Divine Master had commanded to be observed; and they knew with equal certainty that that Divine Master would never allow man to add to, or subtract from, or change in any way whatever the Gospel which He had announced. That Gospel was in their hands, and they would guard its identity and integrity at the expense of their lives. They condemned emphatically and unhesitatingly the doctrine which taught the obligation of the Jewish ceremonial law on the Gentile converts.

"Then it pleased the Apostles and ancients, with the whole Church, to choose men of their own company, and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas who was surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, writing by their

hands: The Apostles and ancients, brethren, to the brethren of the Gentiles that are at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commands: it hath seemed good to us, assembled together, to choose out men, and send them to you with our dearly-beloved Barnabas and Paul; men who have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who themselves also will by word of mouth tell you the same things. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well " (*Acts* xv. 22-29).

Such was the decree. The importance attached to it, the care that was taken to promulgate it, and the effort that was made to secure its observance, may be judged from the forty-first verse of the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, in which the history of the council is given: "And he (Paul) went through Syria and Cicilia, confirming the Churches: commanding them to keep the precepts of the Apostles and the ancients." And the same may be gathered from the fourth verse of the sixteenth chapter, in which are found these words: "And as they (Paul and Timothy) passed through the cities they delivered unto them the decrees for to keep, that were decreed by the Apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem."

The consequences they had anticipated quickly followed. Several apostacies date from the holding of that council. Some, who till then had been amongst the most firm adherents of the Church, broke with her completely, and became her most bitter and determined persecutors. As long as she withheld from condemning Judaizing innovations, they were numbered amongst her best friends; the moment she pronounced her definition of condemnation, they assumed an attitude of the most desperate antagonism. Her stern, unyielding guardianship of her doctrines brought upon her a persecution from which a slight compromise would have saved her. But she could not purchase peace at the sacrifice of even the least tittle of her teaching.

Now, does not the course of action which this council followed naturally suggest the question: Would the Apostles have acted piously, prudently, or even justly, in thus giving a decision which they foresaw would most likely sever from the Church men who had great influence for good or for evil, if they thought it mattered little whether people believed the Gospel as our Lord delivered it, or believed that Gospel when added to, diminished, or changed by the innovations of man? Or, if they thought it mattered little whether an element of falsehood was mixed up with the truth, why not tolerate the different views prevailing as to the obligation or non-obligation of the Mosaic ceremonial law being essential to the Christian Faith, and leave all in peace and free to hold which opinion they preferred on this point, provided they professed themselves members

of the New Church, and continued to fulfil her precepts?

But, further, does not the holding of that council, the circumstances that led to its convocation, and the decisions it put forth, suggest another question? Would those Apostles, who condemned this innovation of Judaism, have approved the modern system of Liberalism in religion, of Latitudinarianism, of Indifferentism, or whatever name we choose to give it? Would Peter, James and John, Paul and Barnabas, or any other Apostle, have ratified at that council the doctrine that God was indifferent what form of Christian belief people adhered to, provided they were good people after their own fashion? Can any reasonable, serious man hold that the Apostles had it in their power on that occasion to pronounce the decision that, after all, men were not strictly bound to believe the doctrines of the New Gospel—that they were quite at liberty to adopt any other doctrines in preference if they chose? If so, it was useless to hold a council at all, useless to teach, useless to preach; and far worse than useless, it was both indiscrete and foolish to evoke such a storm of opposition to themselves.

A theory of religion that would have been condemned in the Church of the first century cannot be regarded as tenable in the Church of the nineteenth. The Church of Christ does not change—if she did, she would not be the Church of Christ. She cannot condemn a doctrine at one period as heretical, and sanction it at another as being in harmony with orthodox teaching.

Here, then, in the very outset of Christianity, we see the Apostles in possession of the deposit of faith, holding in their hands the treasure of those revealed truths which their Divine Master meant to constitute His religion—a religion which was more precious in their eyes than life itself, and to protect which against the blighting breath of error—they were willing to shed their blood and die the martyr's death. Restless, turbulent, novelty-seeking men sought to tear it from their grasp, to enlarge it, to improve it, to make it square with their individual ideas of Christian obligation, to give it a form of their own. But an authoritative declaration, which bore upon it the impress of Divine inspiration, coming from the lips of Apostles assembled in sacred council, made them understand that that religion meant *one* thing, and not *anything*—that it was impenetrable to heresy—that it was proof against the assaults of error or innovation—that the opinions of men's private judgment could never find a place in it—that the privilege of individual preference must ever be discountenanced and repudiated by it, as a blasphemous attempt to dissolve the Gospel of Christ, and to melt to nothing the doctrines He came from Heaven to announce—that it must ever keep the form and shape and colour it had at the beginning—that it must preserve till the end of time the complete identity it had on the day when it was first confided to their sacred keeping.

Such was the attitude of the Church towards heresy and innovation in the first century, while her first Apostles still lived. She had just come fresh

from the hands of her Divine Founder. The Holy Ghost had ascended upon her on the day of Pentecost, and she was yet in the splendours of His first indwelling. The Apostles, who were the custodians of her doctrines, and who were to bear them to the ends of the earth, were guided by the inspirations of that Divine Spirit; and, thus guided, they acted in the Name and spoke with the Voice of Him who gave them the great commission to teach and to preach. What *they* approved was approved by *Him*, and what *they* condemned was condemned by *Him*. Surely we cannot say that in preaching the Gospel, and in condemning error, they went beyond the limits of His authorisation. Surely the course of action which they took in the face of heresy was the course of action their successors were to take in similar circumstances to the end of time. Surely, too, all will freely admit that the Church was right in *their* day; for if she was not right in *their* day she has *never* been right. And if in that day, when, in the admission of all, she had still upon her the signs of her Divine credentials, she was so intolerant of error, can she afford to be less intolerant of error now? If she felt it a duty to condemn error in the first century, can she let it pass unnoticed in the nineteenth? If she would not allow the least addition to be made to her doctrines while her first Apostles still lived, can she allow the people of the present day to make any change in those doctrines, or to believe what they like or deny what they like? If so, who gave her leave to change her spirit—to depart from the stern, unyielding rigour with which she

guarded the Gospel of her Divine Founder in the beginning? Who authorised the successors of the Apostles to be more indulgent towards heresy than the Apostles had been themselves? Was the Church which would not, and could not, bear the interference of free inquiry in the apostolic age to set the seal of her sanction on that privilege at any future date? Did she not mean the decisive voice of her first council to give the tone to her teachings in this respect down to the consummation of the world?

Suppose that that first council had been convoked, not to discuss the question of Jewish or Mosaical observances, but to discuss the question which is the main subject of this little tract—*i.e.*, whether one religion was as good as another, whether it could be lawfully held that God did not care what religion people professed, provided they were good people after their own ideas—could we imagine the Apostles putting forth a decision like this?—"Knowing that all religions are equal in the sight of God, and foreseeing the different opinions that will prevail amongst men, and foreseeing, consequently, the difficulty of preserving unity in matters of doctrine, it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to declare that all people shall be at perfect liberty to believe that one religion is as good as another—that they shall be at perfect liberty to give any meaning they like to those words of Christ, and to those words of us, the Apostles, which will be handed down to them—that they shall be entirely free, too, to believe as much as they like, or as little as they like—that it is

a matter of absolute indifference to God what creed a man professes, provided he live up to it."

Now, if the theory of Indifferentism, Latitudinarianism, Liberalism in religion, were tenable, this decision would have sounded perfectly natural on the lips of the Apostles assembled in council; and yet such decision would have been in absolute opposition to the sacred cause that had brought them together, and that united their voices in condemning the men who sought to force upon the Church their own private, personal views of religion. Nay, it would be nothing short of a blasphemy to say that such a definition could come from the lips of those who stood around Jesus Christ on the day of His Ascension and heard from His lips the memorable words—"Going teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." May we not imagine we hear those heroic heralds of the faith speaking from the benches of that first council chamber to the generations yet unborn—to their successors in the most distant centuries?—and saying to them—"As *we* have done, so do ye. Guard, protect, defend the deposit of faith against the assaults of innovation, against the dictates of private judgment, against the errors of men, against all the false theories of time, and do not ever allow the least breath of heresy to rest upon it."

CHAPTER V.

Further Refutation of Indifferentism from Revelation—Refutation from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.

I HAVE said that the importance attached to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem, the care that was taken to promulgate it, and the effort that was made to secure its observation, might be gathered from the forty-first verse of the chapter in which the history of the council is given. Allusion is made in the verse in question to the mission of St. Paul to the churches in Syria and Cilicia: "And he (Paul) went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the Apostles and of the ancients."

I may add that the effort made to procure the fulfilment of that decree may be seen in still clearer light in the words of that great Apostle himself to the Galatians. In his epistle to the neophytes of Galatia we find him branding with withering curse those very same errors which he and his brethren in the Apostolate had assembled in council to combat and to crush. And the words of warning and reprehension which he writes on the occasion embody an overwhelming refutation of this flexible system of Indifferentism.

Language could not be stronger, more clear, or more scathing than that in which this great doctor

of the Gentiles condemns and anathematises those who sought to introduce a second Gospel among the Galatians. He himself had evangelised the Galatians, and had made them members of the one true fold. Scarcely, however, had the seeds of faith begun to germinate and produce fruit amongst them, when the voice of heresy was heard. Galatia was one of the portions of Asia Minor in which the struggle made by the Jewish converts to have the ceremonial precepts of the Mosaical law superadded to the Gospel of Christ, and made binding on the Gentile converts, was most violent and most persistent. The Judaising teachers had succeeded in spreading their doctrines of innovation pretty widely. St. Paul, hearing that some of those whom he had won to Christ had fallen away, through the influence of spurious evangelists, wrote an epistle to the Galatians. The first chapter of that epistle strikes as directly at certain errors of the present day as at those errors in condemnation of which it was originally written. After wishing the Galatians grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, he says: "I wonder that you are so soon removed from him who called you to the grace of Christ, to another gospel: which is not another; only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you, beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so I now say again: If any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema. For I give

you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

I have just implied that this scathing, unqualified condemnation of false teaching strikes as directly at the Indifferentism of the nineteenth century as at the errors of the innovators of the first century, who sought to impose useless burdens on the Galatians. May I not express the idea in stronger language still? St. Paul was denouncing men whose chief error was to put forward as binding in conscience certain ceremonial precepts of the Mosaic Law, which had been of obligation in the Old Dispensation, which could never be binding as part of the New, and which were to be entirely abolished in the first century of the Church's history. The aim of those proud zealots was not so much to change any particular article of faith, as to add to the articles of faith, superfluous, and henceforth useless, ceremonial observances. And if he spoke with such vehemence against those who tried to add to the Gospel things which had once been obligatory, and still were lawful—for Jewish converts—would he not have used stronger and more unsparing language still against the abettors of a system which attempts to overthrow the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and which teaches errors that are in open, palpable contradiction to them? If he hurled such withering anathemas on the heads of the men who dared to add human opinions to the doctrines of the Church, what anathemas would he not thunder against those who should seek to sap her

very foundations by proclaiming that it did not matter whether people believed the Gospel she taught, or some other Gospel which denied what she affirmed, and affirmed what she denied!

Can we conceive the man who wrote these words of apostolic censure receiving into the Church, or permitting to remain *in* the Church, Galatians, Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thesalonians, Hebrews, Jews, or people of any country under the sun, if they persisted in refusing to become her members, or to remain in her communion except on the condition that they were to have the free exercise of their private judgment and to be at liberty to accept or reject this or that particular doctrine according to their own individual interpretation of what is contained in Holy Scripture? Or can we imagine that if he appeared now in this nineteenth century before the influential, learned advocates of Indifferentism, he would give any assent to, or connive at, the statement that all gospels are good—that one religion is as good as another—that all Christian creeds, although they contradict each other in matters which are of vital importance, if any can be, are equally good, or pretty much the same; and that it is quite immaterial which of them a man embraces as his symbol of faith, provided he shape his life after the one upon which his choice has fallen? *They* must have a strong imagination, indeed, who can suppose that such a theory could be endorsed by the Apostle, who pronounced such scathing anathemas on the innovators of Galatia.

But, further, it must not be overlooked (for it is a

point deserving of very special notice) that he expresses his condemnation of those erring evangelists who sought to force false teachings on the Galatians, a second time, and almost in the same terms. Lest the Galatians might suppose that his words of censure were rhetorical, or that he was writing from human impulse, or that he was rebuking them from a feeling of intense disappointment at their sudden change, and that in calmer moments he would reprove them with less severity—lest any thought of that kind should enter their minds, he repeats, with all the power he can command, and with all the emphasis with which his character of Apostle can invest his words, the same anathema again: “As we said before, so I say now again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema.”

More than this, as the false teachers, whose sophistry and influence he wanted to make powerless, had quoted, but of course falsely quoted, the authority of Peter, James, and John in support of their opinions, he (St. Paul) pointed to the Gospel which he had preached as a thing of such sacredness, such indissoluble unity, such everlasting identity, that neither he nor any of the Apostles, nor even an angel of God, had power to change it in the least item. “I wonder,” he says, “that you are so soon removed from him who called you to the grace of Christ, to another gospel, which is not another.” He first condescends to style the errors of those heretical evangelists “another gospel,” in order that, by correcting himself in having dignified them by that name, he

may draw more attention to them, and that his overwhelming, crushing condemnation of them may call forth greater horror, and may be more deeply impressed upon their memories. "Which is not another gospel," he adds; for another gospel there cannot be—there can never be. There is but one, *the* one which we have preached to you—while the world lasts there cannot be another. Wicked men may strive to pervert it, to add to it, to diminish and explain it away, to mutilate, to corrupt, to change it; but it still remains, and must *ever* remain, unchanged, unchanging, and unchangeable, like the God whose immutable truths it announces. "Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever" (*Heb.* xiii. 8). "One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all" (*Ephes.* iv. 5, 6).

Some, however, who would fain justify, through the principles of Indifferentism, the system of faith which they at present profess (although they have serious misgivings about its truth), take refuge in a fact which affords anything but ground for solid argument. When driven from every other position, they fall back upon this as a sort of forlorn hope. They say: "The creed which I now profess was the creed professed by my father; it was the creed of my grandfather, the creed of my ancestors from time immemorial—at all events, since the Reformation: if it was good enough for them, it ought to be good enough for me."

This is weak philosophy indeed. The many and wonderful conversions to the Catholic faith which

have taken place in England within the last half century might be regarded as furnishing a sufficient answer to this. But entirely apart from the logic of such events, an answer is easily found. The fact that a man's religion was the religion of his father, the religion of his grandfather, and the religion of his ancestors for centuries past, does not prove that religion to be true. If it was wrong in its beginning, it has been wrong ever since; age cannot have made it right. The transmission of an error from one generation to another cannot change that error into truth. Length of time, under certain given circumstances, may give a prescriptive claim to the possession of property, but no number of years can give error any sort of claim to the submission of man's understanding. A custom may be sanctified by antiquity; but an antiquity equal to the age of the world could not sanctify falsehood or change heresy into orthodox religion.

That falsehood may be polished up, refurbished, gilded, draped in a fascinating sophistry, which makes it appear tolerable, plausible, and even commendable in the eyes of the over-credulous and unreflecting; it is falsehood, however, all the while, and must remain falsehood to the day of doom.

More than this, if reasoning of this kind justified a man in remaining in the creed he was born in, the Gospel of Christianity could never have been reasonably expected to make any progress. For both the Jews and the Gentiles, to whom the Apostles preached, might, in such a supposition, have rejected entirely the doctrines of the New Faith. They could

have said to those who sought to make the light of the Christian Gospel shine upon them that they were quite satisfied with the religion they were already professing, that it had been the traditional religion of their families for centuries before, that they did not deem themselves better than those of their race who had gone before them, and that they could not make up their minds to abandon a form of worship to which their predecessors had clung so long, so faithfully, so persistently, and so scrupulously.

But further, our opponents, by this quasi-appeal to the past, are unconsciously opening the way to the argument which, of all others, is the most fatal to the theory they are advocating. For although their present faith has been, in its many and perpetually changing forms, the faith of their fathers for some generations, or even some centuries past, yet there was a time a little further back when it was not the faith of their fathers. From the sixteenth century, Protestantism, or some fragmentary religion which was an offspring of Protestantism, *may* have been the creed according to which the successive generations of their family worshipped; beyond that century it could not have been, for the simple reason that it did not exist. And if it had no existence till *then*, and was born into the world only at that date, it was born more than fifteen hundred years too late to be the religion of which St. Paul spoke when he said: "If I or an angel of heaven preach to you a gospel besides that which we have preached, let him be anathema."

Cardinal Manning, speaking on "Revealed truth

definite and certain," and referring to this last resource of the Indifferentist, says: "Well, you will perhaps tell us that you have inherited the faith you hold. The inheritance of faith, that is a Divine principle. We bow before the principle of inheritance. But why did you cut off the entail of your forefathers? Why, three hundred years ago, did you cut off the entail of that inheritance? If it be not cut off, why is the contest? If it be cut off, why was it cut off? To inherit the faith is the Divine rule. It needs only one thing, infallibility, to secure it. It needs only one support to give it substance and certainty: a Divine tradition flowing from the Throne of God through Prophets, Seers, Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Saints, and Doctors in one world-wide stream, ever deepening, never changing, from the beginning until now. Show this Divine certainty as the basis of your conviction, and then inherit both truth and faith. But the inheritance of opinion in a family, or a diocese, or a province, or nation—what is it? Human in the beginning, and human to the end: 'the traditions of men.' You say you have inherited the faith, and that this is the Church of your forefathers. Go back three hundred years ago and ask the priests of God, who stood then at the altar, how *they* would expound the faith you still profess to hold. Ask them what they believed while they ministered in cope and chasuble. Go back to the Apostle of England who first bore hither again the light of the Gospel after Saxon paganism had darkened this fair land. Ask St. Augustine what he believed of these words: 'Thou

art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.' Give *your* exposition, and ask *his*. What would he have taught you of visible unity? What would he teach you of the Church of God? Ask him: Is it one numerically, or only by metaphor? Is it visible, that all men may see 'the city seated on a mountain,' or invisible, that men may weary themselves and never find it? Has it a head on earth representing its Divine Head in heaven? Or has it no head, and may set up many of its own? What would he have taught you of your baptismal creed? Or that great Saint who sent him from the apostolic throne, what would he have testified to you of those doctrines of faith which you are to look upon as errors? Ask Gregory, first and greatest of the name, what he believed of the powers left by the Incarnate Son to His Church on earth; what he taught of the power of the keys transmitted by his predecessors in lineal descent from the hands of his Divine Lord. Ask what he taught of the power of absolution in the Sacrament of Penance; what he believed of the Reality on the altar, and of the Holy Sacrifice daily offered in all the world; of the Communion of Saints ever interceding, by us ever invoked; of the intermediate state of departed souls, purifying for the kingdom of God. Ask Gregory, saint and doctor, to whom we owe the faith, what he taught of those doctrines which you have rejected. If the disciple and his Master, if he that was sent and He that sent him, were to come now and tread the shore of this ancient river, whither would they turn to worship? Would they go to the stately minister, raised by their

sons in faith, where even now rests a sainted king of Catholic England? Would they bend their steps thither to worship the God of their fathers, and their Incarnate Lord, from whom their mission and their faith descended? or would they not rather go to some obscure altar in its neighbourhood, where an unknown and despised priest daily offers the Holy Sacrifice in communion with the world-wide Church of God? If then you claim inheritance as the foundation of your faith, be true to your principle, and it will lead you home. Trifle not with it. Truth bears the stamp of God, and truth changes men to the likeness of God. Trifle not with the pleadings of the Holy Spirit within you; for He has a delicate touch, and sensitively shrinks from wilfulness and unbelief. If truth struggle within you, follow it faithfully. Tread close upon the light that you possess. Count all things loss that you may win truth, without which the inheritance of God's kingdom is not ours. Labour for it and weary yourselves until you find it. And forget not that if your religion be indefinite, you have no true knowledge of your Saviour; and if your belief be uncertain, it is not the faith by which we can be saved" (*The Grounds of Faith*, pp. 16-19).

Though our proper scope is rigid demonstration, yet we may be excused if we make the following little digression to record an example which bears intimately on the phase of Indifferentism which we have just been noticing. This little book may (and we hope it will, largely) fall into the hands of persons outside the Catholic Church who have begun to

doubt the truth of their present religion, and whose chief objection to further inquiry or nearer approach to Catholic unity is the shrinking or shyness, or inward movement of human respect, which they feel at the idea of giving up the traditional creed of their family. Let such reflect on the noble and chivalrous answer given by Count Leopold Stolberg, after he became a Catholic, to Frederick William III., King of Prussia, great-grandfather of the present Emperor of Germany. Stolberg was a man of unswerving uprightness and of uncommon learning. He read much, studied much, reasoned much, wrote much and well. All Germany was filled with the fame of his learning, of his writings, and of his high-mindedness. He was a good man according to his lights; he followed those lights faithfully. After mature deliberation, it became clear to him that he was bound to abjure Protestantism and to embrace the Catholic faith in its stead. He did not hesitate or allow himself to be held back by useless and dangerous delays. He made his submission to the Church of Rome promptly and publicly; and did so in spite of difficulties greater in number, and of a more serious kind, than any that surround the conversions which are taking place around us at present. The first time he appeared at court after his renunciation of Lutheranism and solemn reception into the Catholic Church, the king said to him in a tone of bitter reproach: "I cannot respect the man who has abandoned the religion of his fathers." "Nor I, sire," replied Stolberg; "for if my ancestors had not abandoned the religion of *their* fathers,

they would not have put *me* to the trouble of returning to it."

Here is the right spirit—here is fearless courage of the right kind. Neither the desire of retaining the king's esteem, nor the fear of losing the king's friendship, could sway this noble-hearted man one iota. He saw that Protestantism meant only Latitudinarianism or Indifferentism, that it had no foundation to rest upon, that it led to incipient Rationalism by bringing revelation down to a level with the law of nature, and that in its further stages it led to Atheism. And, seeing this, he broke with it forever, and sought admission into the communion of the Church of Rome.

Indifferentism, then, has no firm ground to stand on. It cannot bear investigation. It may appear substantial, firm, fair, and fascinating in the eyes of those who do not care to look beneath the surface; it breaks and crumbles to pieces in analysis.

It would have us believe that God spoke with the view of revealing something, and that yet He revealed nothing definite; that He made known some doctrine, and at the same time gave men leave to give that doctrine any meaning they pleased; that He proclaimed some statement as true, and left men perfectly free to believe it was false; that He made a revelation, and, while making it, did not care in the least in what sense men received it, or whether they received it at all, or whether they received it in two opposite senses, the one contradictory of the other. It would have us believe that, while our Divine Lord says faith is necessary to salvation, faith after all

is *not* necessary to salvation; in other words, that the statement is true or false according to the standpoint from which it is looked at. It would have us believe that, while God meant something definite when He gave the Ten Commandments through Moses on Mount Sinai, His Divine Son did not mean anything definite at all when, on the Mount of His Ascension, He commanded His Apostles to teach and to preach to the nations the doctrines and precepts they had heard from Him. It will not allow the Ten Commandments to be subjected to the action of free inquiry or private judgment, and it lets free inquiry and private judgment deal as they like with the doctrines revealed personally, directly, audibly, visibly, by our Lord Himself. It makes the Divine message so impalpable, so versatile, so chameleon-like in its changeableness, that by some inherent, heaven-born property which it possesses, heaven knows how, it necessarily accommodates itself to each fresh mind it meets.

Indifferentism means all this and more. It is a contradiction of man's reason, and it is a contradiction of God's Word. It is a contradiction of the great apostolic commission—"Going, teach all nations, teaching them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you." It is a contradiction of the teaching of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of truth; for it sanctions contradictory statements, and therefore necessarily sanctions falsehood. It contradicts the collective teaching put forth by the first Apostles in council; for the Apostles met in council expressly to condemn error and to stop the

inroads of innovation. It contradicts the teaching of the Apostles taken individually; for St. Paul was only echoing the voice of his apostolate brethren, who had been born into the apostolate before him, when he said: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." It is a practical, permanent, persistent contradiction of Christianity. Christianity (I mean orthodox Christianity) may be said to be Christ teaching religion to man. Indifferentism is man explaining *away* that religion, minimising it, reducing it to nothing. Christianity is something supernatural both as to the lights it brings to the mind and as to the laws it imposes on the will. The religion of Indifferentism, when analysed, is hardly anything but an outward, imperfect, and even unfaithful expression of the light of reason, and a repromulgation of the law of nature.

Its natural tendency, therefore (though many of those who profess it as their creed do not, I believe, realise this), is to dissolve all revealed religion, and consequently to dissolve Christ. No creed can stand before so powerful a solvent as this. It is an engine of destruction before which all revealed doctrine must fall to pieces. It tends, as far as in it lies, to loosen every stone in either side of that great arch of Christian truth which spans the universe; nay, it tends to loosen the very keystone of that arch, to bring the whole sacred structure to the ground, to leave the world without a single trace of the Divinity or teaching of Jesus Christ, and to reduce it to that

state of spiritual chaos whose only, or whose best, religion is the "Unknowable." And to this state of utter anarchy in matters of faith, Indifferentism, or Liberalism in religion, would have brought the world long before now, had not the edifice of *true* Christianity been built upon a foundation that could never fail, and been sustained by an omnipotent, though invisible, hand, which made it proof against all the efforts of innovation and all the assaults of men and of devils.

Where that true Christianity is to be found is now the question.

As many of those who belong to non-Catholic denominations will admit that it is *possible at least* that the creed which they now profess is wrong, I do not think that we do any violence to their feelings when we ask them to pray that, in case they have not the true faith at present, the light of God's grace may guide them into the full and calm possession of it. Prayer is the way to the true Church. As the star of the Eastern kings, though its light was intermittent, nevertheless continued to shine with sufficient steadiness till it brought them into the cave of Bethlehem; so the star of grace, which is formed by humble, confident, earnest, and persevering prayer, will infallibly, sooner or later, guide the sincere inquirer into that one true fold in which *alone* Jesus Christ dwells, and in which *alone* He speaks and teaches. It is in the light of this truth we desire all outsiders, into whose hands these pages may fall, to read what we shall now put before them with respect to those signs or marks by which that true fold is to be distin-

guished from every other. We take the liberty of advising them to ask, in the words of Pope's universal prayer—

“If I am right, Thy grace impart
Still in that right to stáy :
If I am wrong, then guide my heart
To find that better way.”

CHAPTER VI.

The Key to the Problem—Love of Truth, and Firm Belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

THERE is hardly a word which is so much abused, perverted, and wrested to so many contradictory meanings as the word *truth*.

Perversion of truth takes place in the sphere of religion more than in any other sphere. For, within the whole range of what is called revelation, there is scarcely a doctrine of which contradictory statements have not been pressed upon the acceptance of the Christian community for belief. It is strange that many who detest inconsistency in every other department of life reconcile themselves to it so easily in the field of Divine revelation. In the Courts of Law, in the ordinary transactions of everyday life, when two contradictory statements are put forward, men say at once—if one is true the other must be false. Nor are they content with merely allowing this; as a rule they take some trouble to find out which statement contains the truth, which the falsehood.

Doubts and contradictions about religion usually arise from erroneous or vague ideas concerning the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Christian religion. Hence, if we convince ourselves beyond doubt that Jesus Christ is a Divine Person—that He is God—all our doubts will disappear.

The first proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ is the argument so often used by the Apostles, the early Fathers, and the great theologians of the Middle Ages—the argument, namely, which is drawn from the prophecies that were made concerning Jesus Christ and their fulfilment in Him, and from the miracles which He Himself wrought to confirm His divine mission.

Since the fall of our first parents, God had never ceased to send successively numerous prophets to announce and describe, with more and more detail, the Messias, who was to replace the Mosaic religion with one more perfect, destined for all people and all ages. These divinely appointed ambassadors specified the time when the Messias was to appear on earth, the family to which He was to belong, the city where He was to be born. They gave, centuries in advance, minute details of His birth, His life, His death, His triumph over death and the world.

The very fact that thousands of years before the birth of Christ His character was delineated with the greatest accuracy, and events connected with His life and teachings, and dependent solely upon the free will of man, were pointed out with the most striking precision, proves beyond all doubt that God Himself was the author of these predictions. For whatever depends upon a free and changeable will no mere creature can foreknow with certainty. Single acts of persons whose characters are well known, may indeed be guessed at; but not such a series as fill up a man's lifetime.

Nor can even single free acts be foreknown by any

created being before the person of whom there is question has come into existence. Hence as these prophecies concerning Christ are so definite, and in parts at least, so complete that they might almost be considered as events which had already taken place, and as they were uttered centuries before Christ was born, it follows necessarily that they proceeded from God. Now in these very prophecies, which thus have God for their author, Christ is represented as a divine person, who assumes a human nature, and through the sufferings of that nature redeems a fallen race; a divine person who has power over life and death, and shares in the works of God's omnipotence. He is represented as the Son of God, this day begotten of the Father; nay, He is called, without any restriction, God the Mighty, a name never used in Holy Writ except when applied to the one true God. So that in these prophecies Christ's divinity is unequivocally attested by the explicit testimony of God Himself, Who cannot deceive nor be deceived.

So, too, as Christ during His lifetime wrought many signs and wonders, which, as even His enemies admitted, no man could work—as He gave sight to persons born blind, cured the most inveterate diseases by a mere word of His mouth, and even restored the dead to life; it necessarily follows that He was God as well as man. For He either did these works through His own power, and then He certainly was God—because He who does the works which only God can do must needs Himself be God;—or the Father did these works for Him, and then too He must be God; because in that case these very works

are God's own testimony to the truth of Christ's claim that He was one with the Father. Consequently it not only may, but it must be said, that if Christ is not God, there is no God in heaven. For as the prophecies that were verified in Him, and the miracles which He wrought, were such that they could proceed from no one but God, and could ultimately serve no other purpose than to confirm Christ's claim that He was a divine person, the Son of God, equal to the Father, it is quite evident that, if Christ's claim were not legitimate, God Himself would have testified to a falsehood. But a god who can testify to a falsehood is a self-contradiction, and can have no objective existence.

The argument, thus briefly indicated, is undoubtedly conclusive, and leaves no alternative except either to admit Christ's divinity or to deny the existence of God.

SECOND PROOF OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

As there are men who sneer at everything that bears reference to prophecies and miracles, it seems preferable, in the present instance, to make use of an argument that does not appeal to the supernatural order. Such an argument is supplied by these very men in their statements concerning the moral character of Christ. It runs thus: If Christ was good, He is God; if Christ is not God, He was not good.

This argument, as will be perceived, is based upon

the universally admitted fact that Christ was a good, virtuous, and noble character; and upon the further fact that He cannot possibly be considered as such a character, except on the supposition that he was God as well as man. It is a short and simple argument, but very effective, as a brief development will make apparent.

Among the host of so-called advanced thinkers, who venture to call in question Christ's divinity, there is not one who does not concede that as man Christ was a model of perfection. Even the most irreligious and the most antagonistic look up with reverence to the purity, the divine self-forgetfulness, the moral beauty and perfection of this unequalled character. Nor do they at all hesitate to give expression to their admiration. "Do you love the beautiful?" they say, "you must love Christ; for He is the ideal of all beauty. Do you worship moral grandeur? you must worship Christ, for beyond His grandeur there is none other." Hence even such religious sects as consider Him a mere man still pay Him an homage that falls but little short of being divine. This universal admiration of Christ's goodness and moral grandeur has been neatly epitomized by the infidel philosopher Rousseau in one terse sentence: "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God."

Taking, therefore, the freely and universally admitted statement that Christ was a good, virtuous, and noble character, it necessarily follows that He is a divine person. Because even the most superficial

examination of His life and teaching, as historically recorded by His contemporaries, brings out this remarkable and undeniable fact, that not a single one of the virtues, for the practice of which He is so highly praised, was genuine, except on the supposition that He was God as well as man. Take, for instance, His much admired charity; how boundless it seemed to be! He was so universally kind and sympathetic that the people followed Him whithersoever He went, and that the Evangelist did not hesitate to say: "He went about doing good to all." He instructed the ignorant, comforted the afflicted, fed the hungry, healed the sick, and even through sheer pity and compassion restored the dead to life. Who can read the touching Sermon on the Mount, or the pathetic discourse after the Last Supper, or call to mind the many affecting parables in which He was wont to speak to the people, without being convinced of the genuineness of His all-embracing charity? Who, with these daily proofs of Christ's charity before him, would even so much as suspect that He was not sincere when He said: "I am the good Shepherd, I give my life for my sheep; the Son of man did not come to destroy souls, but to save them?" What charity ever appeared more consistent or more unselfish? And yet the moment you suppose that the Christ who spoke thus to His followers was a mere man all these protestations and evidences of His unselfish charity turn out to have been but so many lies that concealed a most diabolical malice. If He was but man, if He was not also God, then, whilst He thus proposed himself to the world as the very

personification of charity, He was knowingly and deliberately and of set purpose leading His disciples and the people, and uncounted millions then still unborn, not only into the misery of temporal ruin, but into the eternal horrors of hell. For in all He said and in all He did He had ultimately no other object in view than to induce the world to acknowledge Him as God. Throughout His public career He insisted upon His divine mission: He claimed to be one with the Father, He pointed to His works as so many proofs of His divinity, and on the very eve of His death, when solemnly adjured by the High Priest to tell once more what He had told them so often, whether He was indeed the Son of the Most High God, He unhesitatingly replied: "Thou hast said it," that is, "I am in very deed." Nor did He simply state His divine relationship as a fact, but He demanded that all should recognize Him as the Son of God; He demanded that for His sake all should be ready to leave father and mother, and all else they held dear in the world. He demanded that for their faith in His divinity they should be prepared to suffer hunger and thirst, and the torments of fire and the rack, and to lay down their very lives. Nor yet did He demand this in theory only, but He knew and foresaw that it would be reduced to bitter practice. When He said to His Apostles, "I send you like sheep among wolves," He was fully convinced that the most dreadful tortures and certain death would be the lot of many of His followers.

Now, if we suppose that He was God as well as man, then He was justified in demanding all this;

nay, then His demands were in perfect accord with the most sublime charity, because, if He was God, He could make all these tortures bearable, and He could so munificently reward those who bore them for His sake that every temporal loss was but the source of eternal gain. But if He was a mere man, if He was not God, then His demands were most unjust; then, so far from being kind and charitable as He pretended to be, He was the most heartless wretch that ever lived. Because in that case He knowingly and deliberately sacrificed the temporal and eternal happiness of millions to His own vain caprice and boundless ambition. If He were not God, the blood of the twelve million martyrs, who laid down their lives for their *faith in His divinity*, as He had demanded, would cry to heaven for vengeance, as did the blood of Abel against the fratricide Cain. If He were not God, the whole Christian past, and the best and noblest of the human race to-day, would rise up against Him as the author of the most shameful idolatry. No, if Christ be not God, He was not good; and yet all, without exception, admit that He was good; therefore all, without exception, must admit that He is God.

The same conclusion may be drawn from a consideration of the virtue of religion. To all appearances Christ was most profoundly religious. He scrupulously observed all that was prescribed in the law of Moses concerning divine worship. He visited the temple at stated times, and evinced the greatest zeal for the house of God. He prayed much and taught His disciples to pray. He manifested in word

and deed the greatest respect for God and His holy law. "I am come," He said, "not to destroy the law, but to perfect it. My meat it is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work. Be ye not only hearers of the word, but doers. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its justice. If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off; if thy eye scandalize thee, tear it out and cast it from thee." In these and similar expressions He ever inculcated the most absolute submission to God. Now, if He was both God and man; if He was a divine person, who had assumed a human nature, His life and His teachings were perfectly consistent. Then He practiced that submission to His Father which necessarily resulted from the dependent condition of His human nature; then He enforced His precepts by the power of His own striking example. But if He were a mere man, if He were not also a divine person, then all these outward expressions of respect for God and the law of God were but a cloak intended to hide the blackest of treasons. For whilst He so zealously championed the cause of the Most High, He demanded for Himself divine homage, and made Himself deliberately for all future ages the center of divine worship. If He Himself was a divine person, if He was one with the Father, as He claimed He was, then His efforts to secure for Himself divine homage necessarily promoted the cause of God. But if He were only a man, if He Himself were not God, then He was God's greatest enemy, trying His best to lead the world away from God, and thus rising above Lucifer in His titanic revolt against the God of

heaven. Were He not True God of True God, He would have been justly condemned by the Sanhedrim as a blasphemer, and His death upon the cross, terrible though it was, would have been too slight a punishment for His blasphemous arrogance. Consequently as Christ was not religious, except on the supposition that His claim to divinity was legitimate, and on the other hand, as all admit that Christ was profoundly religious, it necessarily follows that all must acknowledge Him as God.

Again, the same conclusion stares us in the face when we consider the virtue of humility. Christ's humility looks up to us from every page of the Gospel. He was humble in His birth in the stable, humble in His life of lowly toil at Nazareth, humble in His death upon the cross. His life was but a succession of humiliations, and He seemed to embrace them all with eagerness. He associated with sinners and allowed Himself to be baptized like one of them. He enjoined upon the sick, whom He healed of their infirmities, to conceal the glory of His miracles; He fled into the mountains when the people wished to make Him king, and He made Himself the servant of those who called Him Master. Yet if He were a mere man, all this outward show of lowliness was but a most despicable hypocrisy, which had no other object than to secure more fully the glory which He affected to despise. For in that case, whilst He pretended to take the last place, He in reality aimed at the first, posing before the world as a God Who humbled Himself, and Who because of his very self-abasement must needs be the object of greater

admiration. If He were a mere man, and not also a divine person, then must be applied to Him the fearful denunciation which He Himself hurled against the Pharisees, when He said: "Ye whitened sepulchres fair indeed to the eye, but within full of dead men's bones." No, if Christ be not God, He was not humble; He was the very incarnation of the spirit of pride. On the contrary, if He was humble, as all admit He was, He is God; "a God," as the Apostle puts it, "who emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and in habit was found as a man."

And so whatever other virtue you may ascribe to Christ, the moment you suppose that He was a mere man all these reputed virtues turn out to have been but so many vices. On the other hand, however, if you grant that He was, what He Himself claimed to be, the Son of God become man to redeem the world by His life and death, these same virtues are most real. Now, as the very men with whom we are arguing freely and unreservedly admit that Christ was a good, virtuous, and noble character, they are compelled by sheer force of logic to admit also that He is God.

The foregoing argument is partly based upon Christ's claim that He was the Son of God, one in nature with the Father, yet were we for argument's sake to concede that He never openly asserted His divine personality, the conclusion arrived at would still hold good. For His unvarying conduct was such that those with whom He came in daily contact inferred from it that He wished them to accept Him as

God. It was for this reason that "the Jews took up stones to stone Him," that the Sanhedrim condemned Him to death, that the Scribes and Pharisees demanded of Pilate that He should be crucified, and that Pilate himself was sorely troubled, believing Him to be more than a mere man. Now if under these circumstances we suppose that He was but a human being, that He was not a divine person, then charity, not to say justice, demanded that He should have corrected the false impression to which His conduct had given rise; for there was question of grave scandal, and imminent danger of condemning an innocent man (such our adversaries suppose Him to have been) to the most shameful of deaths: yet so far was He from correcting the views of those whom His conduct would have deceived if He were not God, that He deliberately confirmed them in their belief; for He pointed to His works as proving that He was one with the Father, He told them that His "kingdom was not of this world," and that though they were to condemn Him as a blasphemer, they should see Him "sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Such conduct must either be considered as the grossest violation of charity, or it is a most striking proof that He was in very deed the Son of God, one in nature with the Father.

The same must be said of the virtue of religion. Whether He openly claimed that He was a divine person, or never made such a claim, the fact remains that when Peter declared Him to be God, in the memorable words, "Thou art the Son of the Living

God," He rewarded that open profession of faith by making Peter His vicegerent upon earth; and when Thomas made a similar profession by addressing Him as "My Lord and my God," He openly praised him for the same; so that we are constrained either to acknowledge Him as God, or to despise Him as an abettor of idolatry.

So again was His humility but a sham, except on the supposition that He was God as well as man. For how can a mere man stand up before the people and say, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" "Be ye holy as I also am holy." "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart?" Is it in phrases like these that a truly humble man parades his virtues before the public gaze? If so, then Lucifer was humble when he exclaimed: "Above the clouds will I place my throne; I will be even like unto the Most High."

Hence whatever way we may look at it, whether we maintain that Christ openly asserted His divinity, as He most certainly did, or whether, for argument's sake, we grant that He never made such a claim, it always remains true that He can be considered a good, virtuous and noble character only on the supposition that He was God as well as man.

It is on this point that all those who impugn Christ's divinity stand convicted of the most glaring inconsistency. They point to Christ as an ideal of moral perfection, and yet they reject the very foundation upon which all His claims to that title are based. Denying that He is God, they must needs make Him

a hypocrite, a deceiver, a blasphemer. Some of them have recognized this inconsistency, and have tried to explain it away by saying that Christ, the most perfect of men, the greatest of philosophers, the mightiest of prophets, was subject to hallucinations regarding His own personality. They say that He was a monomaniac, and that consequently He was not responsible for His actions when He declared Himself to be the Son of God. It is truly wonderful to what length persons will go in order to escape admitting the plain truth. Christ subject to hallucinations! Christ a monomaniac! Such an explanation is either a clear proof of the bad faith of the men who advance it, or it is an exhibition of the most colossal ignorance of the laws that govern human actions. There may be method in madness, but not a method that changes folly into wisdom; not a method that can transform a fool into a prophet; not a method that can "lift empires from their hinges, and change the stream of ages." No, Christ was not a fool; Christ was not an impostor; Christ was even what the adversaries of His divinity admit Him to have been, a good, virtuous, and noble character: and as He can have been such only on the supposition that He was God as well as man, we are constrained by sheer force of logic to confess that He is indeed a God-Man, and therefore a Divine Person.

The impious J. J. Rousseau goes so far as to confess that, "if the life and death of Socrates are those of a wise man, the life and death of Christ are those of a God."

Again, this same Rousseau says: "Shall we say

that the history of the gospel is invented at will? My friends, this is not the way inventions are made; and the facts in the life of Socrates are not as well attested as those in the life of Jesus Christ. Never could Jewish authors have found either this tone or this morality. The gospel bears characters of truth so great, so striking, so inimitable, that its inventor would be more marvellous than its hero."

NOTE.—Nearly all this chapter was taken, with permission, from the excellent little book entitled: "Does It Matter Much What I Believe?" By Rev. Bernard J. Otten, S.J. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis.

CHAPTER VII.

INFALLIBILITY IN RELIGION.

IN the preceding chapter we have seen that Christ is a Divine Person—that He is God, equal to the Father. We have now a solid foundation on which to establish the structure of Religion.

It is evident from tradition, from history, and the Sacred Scriptures, that Christ established a Church. This means that God established a Church. From the very *idea* that we have of God, as well as from the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, we know that God is infinitely perfect in every way. Being infinitely wise, He knows how to do all things for the best. Being infinitely good, He wishes us blessings. Being infinitely powerful, He can do all things. Being omniscient, He knows all things, past, present, and future. This being so, what kind of a Church would this God be likely to establish? What kind was needed? What kind would be in keeping with His infinite perfections and His desire to save the souls that He purchased with His precious Blood? Why should He not establish an Infallible Church? What is the objection to the principle? If God had not left us such a Church, would it not be a good thing if He had done so?

Even though you should be an objector to our principle, you approve, and desire infallibility in every affair around you—except One. When your train is crossing a bridge, you instinctively hope that

the bridge will not *fail*, or fall down. You calm your fears with the thought that the architects must have constructed the bridge rightly, because they are supposed to understand their profession. When you build a house, you hope that it will not *fail*, or tumble down. When your attorney pleads your lawsuit, you expect that he will secure an infallible decision—in your favor, of course. You protest against the *failure* of a bank in which you had a few paltry dollars deposited. You even hoped that *your* bank at least would prove *infallible*. When you cross the ocean, you seek the most *infallible* ship that you can find, and you hope that it will not *fail* and let you go to the bottom of the ocean.

Now, in His infinite wisdom, and His love for your immortal soul, God offers you an Infallible bark which He Himself has constructed, and which He pilots, in order to keep you from going down into an everlasting ocean of fire—a bark to bear you safely across the ocean of time, and to land you safely on the shores of a happy eternity; and you either rebel against Him, or you do not give yourself the trouble of finding out whether God has established such an Institution or not, or whether there is an obligation of entering such an Institution.

Again, when you send your children to school, you do not tolerate a professor who teaches them bad grammar, or contradictory multiplication tables. You do not employ a bookkeeper who figures on the basis that two and two make seven, or that three times three are one hundred and twenty-four.

Now, if mathematical truths must infallibly be

uniform, and not contradictory, why should not God, through His Church, teach His Divine doctrines, and His conditions of salvation, as infallibly true, and not contradictory?

When you cast your vote for judges, mayors, governors, and presidents, you seek men who will come nearest to infallibility in their pronouncements. The final decision of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States is practically infallible. There is no appeal. Such a tribunal is necessary for good order and justice, and as a fact it exists. Absolute infallibility is not necessary in the affairs of this life; because "We have not here a lasting city," but absolute Infallibility is necessary when there is question of keeping out of the everlasting fire of hell, and attaining your eternal home in Heaven.

A certain minister in Indiana was tirading against the Catholic Church, and ridiculing its claim to Infallibility. He admitted that the Church was all right at first, as Christ established it; and that it was the only Church for 1500 years, but that it fell into error, and became corrupt, etc. The wife of an old Indian farmer exclaimed: "Lord a'massy; I thought Christ knew better than that. If I was Him, and had all them there powers what He had, I'd put up that there Church so that it would never come down." Her husband quietly added: "And Martin Luther and them other Church builders didn't make a much better fist of it, 'cause we are so divided up now that we don't know where we be. One feller says his doctrine will fetch you to Heaven, and another feller says: No, sir, that there doctrine will land

you in the other place. They ought ter first give us some preachment about which of them we had ought to believe.”

MEANING OF INFALLIBILITY AS APPLIED TO THE CHURCH.

The doctrine of Papal Infallibility is not well understood by our separated brethren, because it is grievously misrepresented by secular writers, and by those who profess to be enlightened ministers of the Gospel.

1. The Infallibility of the Pope does not mean that he is inspired. 2. It does not mean that he cannot sin. The Pope confesses his sins every week like any other ecclesiastic. Not only is the Pope capable of sinning, but it is possible for him to lose his soul. But it is not possible for him to misguide the Church in his official capacity of Teacher of faith and morals, simply because it is not possible for Christ to lie; it is not possible for God's plans to fail; it is not possible for God to be misguided, misled, deceived, or outwitted in the means which He adopted to preserve His Church from error. To accomplish this end, the means which God decreed to use, and which He did use, was to confer on St. Peter and every successive head of His Church the prerogative of Infallibility in their official capacity of guiding His Church in His stead.

No doubt God alone is infallible *by His nature*; but what is to prevent Him from using His infallible power in protecting from error those whom He

had charged to teach in His name, so that their teaching will never deviate from the truth? No mere citizen has the executive power that belongs to the presidency of the United States. But what is to prevent the people from conferring that power on a citizen by electing him President? The power belongs to the office and not to the man.

3. Infallibility is not granted to the Pope as a private teacher, but only in his official capacity, when he judges of faith and morals as Head of the Church.

DEFINITION.—Infallibility, then, simply means that the Pope, as successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, by virtue of the promises of Jesus Christ, is preserved from error of judgment when he promulgates to the Church a decision on faith or morals.

The Pope is not the maker of the Divine Law; he is only its expounder. He is not the author of revelation, but only its interpreter.

The Pope is to the Church, though in a more eminent degree, what the Chief Justice is to the United States. When a dispute arises between two states, the question is usually referred to the Supreme Court at Washington. The Chief Justice, with his associates, carefully examines the case, and then pronounces judgment upon it. His decision is final, irrevocable and practically infallible.

These explanations being given, we are better prepared to consider the proofs of the doctrine of Infallibility.

First Proof. Let us consider our Savior's words

to St. Peter, recorded in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew.

St. Peter's name had been Simon Bar-jona. But God, having pre-ordained him to be the chief pillar of His Church, enlightened him in a particular manner with a distinct faith in the Divinity of Christ, whereof St. Peter made this solemn profession: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Hereupon our Savior dignified St. Peter with a title suitable both to the firmness of his faith and the eminent position which he was to occupy, and gave him the name of Cephas, or Peter, both of which signify a rock. Then, as a further mark of distinction, Christ makes to St. Peter this remarkable promise:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in Heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter (that is, a rock); and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 16, 18.

We should carefully note every one of these remarkable words of Christ. If they mean anything, they mean that Christ established an Infallible Church. Some persons who side with the reformers say: No doubt the Church was Infallible in the days of Christ and the Apostles, and that it was all right for nearly 1600 years; but that Christ did not know of the errors, and the failure of the Church in the 16th century. This language is blasphemy against the attributes of God. It is a denial of the Divinity of Christ.

We have seen in chapter 6th that Christ is God: "I and the Father are one." (John x. 30.) Christ is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity:

"He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. Being God, Christ foreknew every thought that would enter into the minds of the reformers: "Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts?" Matt. ix. 4. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise." 1 Cor. iii. 20. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and looking into the hearts of men. For all things were known to the Lord God, *before they were created.*" Eccclus. xxiii. 28. Again: "The works of all flesh are before him, and there is nothing hidden from his eyes. He seeth from *eternity to eternity.*" Eccclus. xxxix. 24.

Again, Christ not only foreknew what would happen to His Church, but He also foretold persecutions and heresies. In the 24th chapter of St. Matthew he gives minute details of the destruction of the world, and the terrors of the last judgment: "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. *Behold I have told it to you beforehand.*" Matt. xxiv. 24.

In His discourse at the Last Supper, where only the Apostles, the first pillars of the Church, were present, Christ said: "If they have persecuted me,

they *will* also persecute you . . . because they know not Him that sent me." John xv. 20.

Many non-Catholics express wonder and surprise at the successful works and the "complete organization" of the Catholic Church. They seem to forget that the Church is not a human organization. It was planned, and organized, and authorized and is guided by God Himself; and whatever the hand of God touches is destined to be successful without fail.

Christ promises "to build His Church upon a rock." What does this mean? Is it reasonable to believe that Christ, who foresaw everything that was to happen, would have told St. Peter that His Church would be built upon a rock if He had foreseen its future fall? Had He no design that the rock upon which His Church was to be built should be a firm and lasting foundation to it? Or did He act by haphazard, and without end or design? Christ Himself answers all these questions in the following words: "Every one that *heareth* these *my* words, and *doth* them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it *fell not*, for it was founded on a rock." Matt. vii. 24. Whence it is plain that Christ, by promising that His Church should be built upon a rock, intended to assure us that its foundations should be so strong, so deeply laid, that it should stand in spite of all storms, oppositions, heresies, or any efforts whatever to make it fall. And therefore, in order to prevent the very possibility of all but wilful mistakes, in the second part of the promise He

explains Himself and declares positively that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Which words contain two things: 1. They imply a general prediction of what would happen to the Church from the efforts and malice of her enemies, who would oppose or endeavor to corrupt her holy doctrine. And 2. A positive assurance that all their strength and malice, which our Saviour calls "the gates of hell," shall never prevail against His Church.

The prediction has been fully verified. The Jews, the professed enemies of Christ, were the first champions of Satan. They declared themselves openly, and made many furious assaults upon the Church. They abused the Apostles, cast them into prison, and forbade them to teach in the name of Christ. But the Apostles continued their divinely imposed task, saying: "We ought to obey God rather than *men*." Acts v. 29. These persecutors were soon followed by several apostate Christians, as the Ebionites, the Nicolaites, the Cerinthians, and many others, who conspired together to corrupt the purity of the doctrine of the Church. And the ten bloody persecutions raised by the Heathen Emperors in the first three centuries aimed at nothing else than to extirpate the Christian religion, and destroy the Church, root and branch.

Finally, Martin Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Henry VIII. and others rose up against their own mother, the Church. They caused heresy and schism, and claimed that the Church had fallen into error. Christ declared that the Church would not fall into error. Which teacher should we follow? for "no

man can serve two masters." If Christ proved truthful in foretelling all these persecutions, why question His truthfulness as to the event; that is, the triumph of His Church? And, besides the prediction and the promise of Christ, what about the *fact* that His Church has triumphed?

To a thinking mind this whole matter is settled, not by the opinion of the loudest champion of the reformation, but by the answer to the question: Did God lie, or were the reformers mistaken? Was God deceived in His plan of saving the world, or were the reformers misguided? "By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. vii. 20.)

If the Catholic Church ceased to be the Church of God in the 16th century, does it not seem strange that it prospered so well ever since? How could it prosper without God's guidance? "Without me, you can do nothing." If the Protestant churches began to be the churches of God in the 16th century, does it not seem strange that they did not prosper better, especially in the essential feature of unity? "One body and one Spirit; as you are called in *one hope* of your calling. One Lord, one *faith*, one baptism." (Ephes. iv. 4.) "If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." (Mark iii. 24.)

Unity is an essential mark of the Church of Christ. At the Last Supper our Lord addressed the Church only, that teaching body of men, the Apostles; and He prayed to His Father to keep them in unity as a proof of the Divine commission: "Not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through *their word*

shall believe in me; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world *may believe* that thou hast sent me." (John xvii. 20.)

Protestants are now admitting the necessity of this essential principle of unity. "A general council of Protestant churches met in Chicago yesterday to discuss the formation of a general union of the Protestant churches. The object is the gathering of all the Protestant sects in the country into one body."—*Springfield Republican*. That would seem to be a good move; but even if they should succeed, they would still be heretics, because they deny essential doctrines of the one and only Church which Christ established. A simpler way would be to come back to the mother Church which their forefathers abandoned, and which *always preserved* unity. "There shall be *one fold* and *one shepherd*." (John x. 16.)

Second Proof of Infallibility.—When our Lord commissioned the Apostles to teach His doctrines to the whole world, He required the whole world, under the severest penalty, to believe those doctrines.

"Going therefore teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth not what? Evidently all those doctrines, and only those doctrines which Christ commanded the Apostles to teach to the

world: "*All things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"

The Apostles and their successors were the Church. How could our Lord command the people under pain of eternal damnation to believe an erring Church, or a Church liable to err? From the very nature of this commission of our Lord, it is evident that the Church will always teach infallibly, and that there is an obligation for all who would be saved to belong to this one Church of Christ.

"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) As heathens and publicans are not heirs of heaven, neither are those who refuse to hear the Church of Christ. St. Paul tells us that "the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.) If it is the pillar that supports truth, and the groundwork of truth, and the Church of the *living God*, the argument is ended.

A Mistaken Notion.—Many Protestants seem to think because some priests and bishops have gone astray and taught error, that therefore the whole Church fell into error. You might as well say: Because some bad pupils will not learn their lessons, and because some teachers are a disgrace to their profession, that therefore the whole public school system has failed. Particular priests and bishops are not the Church, just as some truant children and disgraceful teachers are not the public school. Judas, one of the twelve Apostles, did wrong, failed badly, betrayed his God, and went to hell under the very eyes of Jesus Christ. Does that prove that the

Church of Christ went astray? Surely one-twelfth of the Catholic ministers, since the days of Christ, have not gone astray; and even if such a proportion had gone astray, it would prove nothing except the weakness of the individual and the strength of the temptations of the devil.

That many individuals in the Church needed reformation no one denies. But the means of reformation and the power of reformation are in the Church itself, and not out of it. The work of reformation is the great object of the existence of the Church. "If he will not hear them, tell the Church." (Matt. xviii. 17.). If a private soldier is zealous for reforms in his regiment, he does not abandon his colors and join the enemy, and turn the cannon on his own regiment. He finds the means and power of reform in his own army.

Third Proof of Infallibility.—In studying the problem of religion, it will help very much to remember that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity took part in the work of the Church. The Father sent the Son to establish the Church: "As the *Father hath sent me.*" The Son came: "Sent *Me.*" The Son went back to the Father, and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost, came to remain with the Church until the end of time. "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you *another Paraclete*—the *Holy Ghost*—that He may *abide with you forever.*" (John xiv. 16.)

If Christ in His visible presence had always remained on this earth as the Guide of His Church, who would deny its Infallibility? What is the differ-

ence between the power of the Son and the power of the Holy Ghost? Christ thought it a better way to withdraw His visible presence, to go back to His Father, and send the Holy Ghost to preside over His Church and to be its Guide until the end of time: “It is *expedient to you* that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (John xvi. 7.) “The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He *will teach you all things*, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever *I shall have said to you.*” (John xiv. 26.) “When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will *teach you all truth*; and the things that are to come He shall *show you.*” (John xvi. 13.)

This promise of our Lord was fulfilled ten days after the Ascension, on the day of Pentecost, by the personal coming of the Holy Ghost, to abide forever as the Teacher and Guide of the Church, in the name and stead of the Incarnate Son. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost *gave them to speak.*” (Acts ii. 4.)

Some non-Catholics may claim that this guidance in the way of truth, and this protection of the Holy Ghost, was promised by our Lord only to the individual. This cannot be, because—1. These promises were made by Christ at the Last Supper, where only the Apostles, the first pillars of the Church, were present. 2. Because the world at large is positively excluded from these promises: “The Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive*, because it

seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but *you* shall know Him, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 17.) 3. Because the claim of mere individual guidance of the Holy Ghost in avoiding error infallibly, is a more pretentious claim than is the Infallibility of the Church. In such a supposition there would be no need of the Church.

From the manner, then, in which the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity established the Church, we see that the Holy Ghost is to the Church what the soul is to a human body, only in an eminently higher degree. In the human body the soul is the living, animating principle; it is the thinking, guarding and protecting principle. So in the Church, the mystic Body of Christ, the Holy Ghost is the living, guarding and protecting Principle.

As the human body must have a head, and as every kingdom and nation must have a visible head through which to guide the people, so God thought best to place over His Church on earth a visible head through whom the soul of the Church, the Holy Ghost, would speak to the people and guide them in the way of salvation. This Head is the Pope, the Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles.

In his discourse to the clergy of Ephesus, the second generation of Catholic ministers over whom the Holy Ghost presided, St. Paul says: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the *Holy Ghost* hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) If the Holy Ghost placed them to rule the Church of God, therefore God's plan

is that the Church be ruled by a *divine* commission, and not by a *human* commission.

In the days of the Apostles a dispute arose concerning circumcision. How was it decided? It is referred to a council of the Apostles at Jerusalem. The infant Church assembles her prelates. The dispute is settled by the Holy Ghost speaking through the mouth of Peter, the visible head of the Church, and the first Pope.

The other Apostles at once agree with St. Peter and the Holy Ghost: "It hath seemed good to *the Holy Ghost and to us.*" (Acts xv. 28.)

Hence we see that the mind of the rulers of the Church, and the mind of the Holy Ghost, is *one* and the *same*.

This Council of Jerusalem is the model and the principle on which the Church has acted ever since. When a question of faith or morals is to be decided, the Pope investigates the matter, takes counsel, has recourse to the Holy Ghost by earnest prayer and meditation, and, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, gives a decision. This decision is final and infallible. This is the principle on which God established His Church, and this is the principle on which the Church has been acting for nearly two thousand years.* The Holy Ghost ruling over and guiding the Church is the connecting link between heaven and earth, and in this principle we see the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus Christ: "Behold,

* Luther was requested to submit his opinions to the Council of Trent. He refused to do so. This Council was the greatest ever held by the Church. It lasted eighteen years. Luther died during the first year of this Council.

I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Christ remains with His Church in the person of the Holy Ghost, who is God, equal in wisdom and power to the Father and the Son.

Therefore, the principle of belief and practice in the Catholic Church is founded on a divinely given and a divinely guarded commission, and not on a humanly assumed or a humanly protected commission.

In the case of the reformers of the 16th century, where did the *divine commission* come in? Where did the promise of *divine* protection come in? All Protestants admit that the religion of the reformers was established by *men*. Now, from the words of the Holy Ghost Himself we get the key to this whole problem. When the Jewish authorities thought of preventing the Apostles from preaching the doctrines of the Church of God, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, said: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be *of men*, it will come to naught; but if it be *of God*, you cannot *overthrow it*, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God." (Acts v. 38.)

NECESSITY OF DIVINE FAITH.—The last argument that we shall use for an infallible religion and an Infallible head is drawn from the necessity of *divine* faith: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi. 6.) This, of course, means divine faith. The *Century Dictionary* defines faith in general as "firm belief based upon confidence in the authority and veracity of another, rather than upon one's own

knowledge, reason, or judgment." Human faith means belief on the authority of a human being. Divine faith means belief on the authority of God.

Now, if the teacher of religious truth be merely human and fallible, my faith in his teaching can never rise above human faith. With a fallible teacher I can never have more than a human opinion about the truths of religion. Human opinion admits of doubt; and doubt excludes divine faith. Therefore, without an *Infallible* teacher it is not possible for me to fulfil the condition of salvation: "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" for this condition means divine faith, and not human opinion. This Infallible Teacher is the Head of the Church established by Christ. "He that heareth you, heareth me." "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body (Church) of Christ; until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God. . . . That henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the wickedness of men." (Ephes. iv. 11.)

The objector says it is enough to have faith in Christ—faith in God. This is not enough; for the Holy Ghost says: "Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith

without works is dead? . . . For even as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (St. James ii. 19-26.)

Now, without an Infallible teacher, how am I to know what those works are, so necessary to my faith that it be a living faith and not a dead faith—a divine faith, and not a mere human faith? The objector says: Guess at them. But guessing is not divine faith. Do and believe as you think best, says another. My believing and thinking is not divine faith if I am out of harmony with the mind of God.

Let us make this point clear. One religion teaches that Christ *is really* present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. Other religions teach that Christ *is not* really present in the Sacrament of the altar—that He is there only figuratively. These two propositions are contradictory. Even humanly speaking, they cannot both be true. How can they both be true in the mind of God? How can they both be truths of Divine faith revealed by God to men? And yet "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Again, one religion teaches that Christ has delegated to His Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests, the power to forgive sins, and that there is an obligation on the part of the people to have recourse to the sacrament of penance for the forgiveness of the grievous sins committed after baptism. Other religions teach that Christ has not delegated such a power, and that there is no such obligation on the part of the people. Both of these contradictory propositions cannot be true. Therefore some one of them does not rise above a human

opinion, and therefore cannot be a truth of Divine revelation. How are we to know which of these propositions is to be believed as a truth of Divine faith? From Scripture and tradition, the vehicles of Christ's own teaching. But—and this is the crucial point—whence can we have certainty that Christ's necessarily true teaching thus carried down to us through the centuries is understood by us as He Himself wishes us to understand it? To make the answer plain to even ordinary intelligences we shall make use of a simple illustration. Just as in the use of the telephone we secure information from afar through the long distance operator, so the Pope, the Operator of the long distance wire to Heaven, ascertains from the Holy Spirit the exact meaning of Christ's teaching, and then transmits this teaching, in the sense of Christ, to the enquiring soul. In this way we get the Divinely assured answer: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." (Acts xv. 28.)

Reason is an *ordinary* gift of God, common to all. Divine faith is an *extraordinary* gift from God, *offered* to all and *required* of all, but obtained only by those who use rightly the *ordinary* gift of reason. Although reason is not Divine faith, yet reason can lead on to the track of divine faith. For instance, my reason tells me that I ought to believe and obey an accredited ambassador. In fact, I am obliged to obey him. My reason teaches me that my Maker has the right of putting down *His* conditions of getting into *His* home in heaven. My reason teaches me, even through means of history and tradition, that my God, as a matter of fact, has

put down those conditions. My reason teaches me that God has sent me *accredited* ambassadors to teach me what I must *do*, and what I must *believe* in order to deserve heaven. Belief in these ambassadors, speaking with the authority of God, is *divine faith*. "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, *God* as it were exhorting *by us*." (2 Cor. v. 20.) These divinely commissioned ambassadors preach to the whole world, not human opinions, but truths of divine faith, truths of God. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever *I have commanded you*." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) "He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved; but he that *believeth not* shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.) "He that believeth"—what? human opinion? "All things whatsoever *I have commanded you*." Here the process of my reasoning stops and divine faith begins. My reasoning has done its work: it has elevated me to a plane where I learn God's conditions of salvation. Now the *will* steps in, and either accepts God's conditions, or rebels against Him. If the will is led by right reason, it will say with Saul of Tarsus: "Lord, what *wilt thou have me to do*?" (Acts ix. 6.) The answer received by Saul, afterwards St. Paul, was: "Go into the city, and there it *shall be told* thee what thou must do." The principle of human opinion was not left open for Saul, unless he wished to continue to be a rebel against Christ and His Church.

The answer to the earnest enquirer will be virtually the same: Go to "the Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth," and there it will be told thee what thou must do.

In His Infallible Church, through the Pope, its Infallible mouthpiece, God teaches the people the truths of faith and the conditions of salvation: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." (John xiv. 26.) "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they *be sent*? Faith, then, cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom. x. 14.)

THE BIBLE.—The same argument holds with regard to the Bible.

Those who deny the existence of a living and Infallible authority have no certainty that the Bible is God's revelation to man.

St. Augustin says: "I would not believe the Gospel were I not moved to it by the authority of the Catholic Church."

Again, without an Infallible authority we cannot know the true meaning of the Bible. This is evident from the many conflicting and contradictory meanings drawn from the Bible by those who deny an Infallible Interpreter. "Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest? How can I, unless some man show me." (Acts viii. 30.)

"No prophecy of Scripture is made by *private interpretation*." (2 Peter i. 20.) Speaking of the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter says: "In which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, *as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction*." (2 St. Peter iii. 16.)

The Catholic Church, founded by Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Ghost, speaking through her Head, the Pope, is the depositary, guardian and interpreter of Sacred Scripture.

Let us end the case by judicial trial. In a vast court imagine on the bench a judge with all the knowledge and wisdom of Solomon—a judge who has never made a mistake. On the right hand are twenty witnesses in favor of the cause. On the left are four witnesses against the cause. The testimony of the last four on the right at least offsets the testimony of the four on the left. There remain sixteen favorable witnesses on the right, and no witnesses on the left to offset their testimony. In whose favor would the wise judge pronounce sentence?

Granting a voice to the dead, nearly twenty centuries of Catholics have said: We were always convinced that the Church of the living God, speaking through the Pope, is Infallible. About four centuries of Protestants have said: We were always convinced that the Church is not Infallible. The testimony of the last four centuries of Catholics at least offsets the testimony of the four centuries of Protestants. There remains the testimony of sixteen centuries of Catholics in favor of the Infallibility of the Church, and there are no Protestants on the other side to offset this testimony. But we are granting too much, because the Reformers disagreed and quarreled amongst themselves, and their successors are divided up into innumerable sects; and hence Protestant testimony nullifies itself.

Now, let us hear the decision of the Judge on the bench. That Judge is Christ Jesus, the Son of the Living God. His decision, ever ancient and ever new, is conveyed in words which have sounded throughout the world for twenty centuries, and which ring out no less clearly, no less compellingly to-day; for He is with His Church "all days, even to the consummation of the world." Here is His decision: "Upon this rock *I* will build *My* Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.) "If he will not hear them, tell the Church. And if he will not *hear* the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) "He that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.)

To this decision the Catholics of to-day give assent with their whole minds and hearts. From this decision the Protestants of to-day appeal. And to what courts is their appeal made? To the courts presided over by the spirits of Martin Luther, Henry VIII, Zuinglius and Calvin.

That the full force of this argument may be perceived, we sum it up in these few words: "*All Christians* for sixteen centuries, and *all Catholic Christians* for *twenty* centuries, bow down their minds and hearts to the clear, unmistakable teaching of Jesus Christ. *Some Christians* for *four* centuries do not accept Christ's teaching as true and final; and thus they necessarily imply that Martin Luther, Henry VIII, Zuinglius and Calvin are wiser and safer guides than He Who is "the way, and the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.)

CHAPTER VIII.

SHORT NOTES FROM HISTORY.

NOTE 1.—The argument of the lack of a divine commission baffled the reformers themselves. The Anabaptists, who were offshoots of Lutherism, differed with Luther in essential matters. Luther said to them: “Do you wish to found a new church? Let us see. Who has sent you? From whom have you received your *commission*?”* The Anabaptists and other Protestant reformers retorted against Luther himself with unanswerable force, asking him where he got *his commission*. Luther was silent as to this argument.

Luther himself, in his book on the Sacrifice of the Mass, says: “How often has my heart beat, reprehending me: Are you always wise? Do all others err? Have so many centuries passed in ignorance? How will it be if you are in error, and you lead so many along with you to damnation?”†

Melancthon, a companion of Luther, wept bitterly over the *dissensions* of Protestantism. He had not the power to heal the crying evil, nor the courage to abandon the system in which it originated. From many passages in his writings bearing on this subject we select the following lament, in a confidential letter to a friend: “The Elbe with all its waves could

* Spalding's History of the Reformation, page 231.

† History of Heresies, Liguori, page 277.

not furnish tears enough to weep over the miseries of the distracted Reformation.” *

NOTE 2.—When the mother of Melancthon was on her dying bed, she said to her son: “My son, it is for the last time you see your mother. I am about to die: your turn will one day come, when you must render an account of your actions to your Judge. You know that I was a Catholic, and that you have induced me to abandon the religion of my fathers. Tell me now, for God’s sake, in what religion I ought to die.” Melancthon answered: “Mother, the new doctrine is more convenient; but the Catholic religion is more secure for salvation.” †

The Reformation, or religious revolt of the 16th century, began at a time when “a train of circumstances had caused faith to wane and grow cold; circumstances which now appealed more to the passions than to reason, more to human considerations than to the principles of faith and the interests of eternity. The Reformation was rather the working out of the three great concupiscences referred to by an inspired Apostle than of a sincere and earnest love of truth and a real desire of reformation.” ‡

Historians of the past, as well as thinking men of the present day, are convinced that if the religious revolt of the 16th century had been attempted fifty years earlier, or fifty years later, it never would have drawn people away from the one Infallible Church which Christ established. If at the present day

* Epist. lib. ii. 202.

† Spalding’s History of the Reformation, page 85.

‡ See Spalding’s History of the Reformation. This is a magazine of useful information, from Protestant as well as Catholic sources.

a new religion were started by a renegade priest who had married a nun, how many followers would he have? Everyone probably knows that Martin Luther was an apostate monk—a renegade priest, who broke his priestly vows by marrying a nun, thereby causing her to apostatize and to break her vows by which she had consecrated herself to God.*

Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, promised the revenues of monasteries to Luther if he would favor his design of having two wives at the same time. Luther grants his request, and thereby approves of bigamy, for which one would be punished by the courts of the United States.†

The following Notes are from A. H. Craig, a non-Catholic, or rather one who was never baptized in any religion, and therefore an impartial judge and historian.

In the preface of his valuable book, "Christian Persecutions," Mr. Craig says: "This volume is not written in the interest of any creed, but in the interest of facts as they have existed and as they exist to-day. It is written to dispel these three enemies of Christianity—Intoleration, Bigotry and Ignorance; and, while I am not a member of any church, and have never received the blessings of baptism, yet I will do all within my power to hasten the day when persecution shall cease, and the grand truths of God will be known to all men."

NOTE 3.—In the course of this beautiful book Mr. Craig says:

"Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, Saxony, Nov. 10, 1483, and died in 1546.

"The whole life of Luther was one of startling events. His actions were the outcome of impulse rather than modest submission.

"History informs us that it was not the intention

* See Life of Luther, by Michelet, a Protestant historian.

† See Protestant authorities quoted by Spalding, Hist. of the Ref., p. 483.

of Luther to renounce the Church, but to ingraft his logic into it.

“He tells the Pope that there was nothing dangerous in his line of teachings. He says: ‘Quicken, kill, call, recall, approve, reprove, as you please, I will acknowledge your voice as that of Christ presiding in you.’

“He believed in the Pope, and yet he wrote against him. He believed that the authority of the Pope must be recognized, and yet he taught disobedience.

“When Luther was called for trial we find this remarkable presentation of his position: ‘I, Brother Martin Luther, the Augustinian, protest that I revere and follow the Holy Roman Church in all my words and deeds, present, past and future. If anything otherwise has been said, I wish it unsaid.’

“This statement of Luther is given as evidence that he believed in the Church of Rome, the Pope and his decrees, but at the same time appeared unconscious of having written aught that was antagonistic to them. He was confronted with forty-one errors, and asked to recant. These errors were statements made in his theses, and antagonized the laws of the Catholic Church. Luther responded with gross insults to the Pope, and in his address, “To the Emperor and the Nobility of the German Nation, on the Improvement of Christian Morals,” formally severed himself from the Church by rejecting the hierarchy, denying the priesthood, calling upon the temporal powers to rise up against the Pope, deprive him of all government, abolish the taxes for his support, abrogate all issues of censures, permit

the clergy to marry, discard masses for the dead, discard requirements for fasting, abstinence from flesh on Friday, and other important tenets of the Catholic Church. This address was published throughout all Germany, and the financial advantages to be gained by the Princes and Nobility won many ardent supporters for a complete severance of the power of Rome.

“ We now see the man in the fullness of a dictator. If he could not place his philosophy as the truths of the Church, he would call down the wrath of Heaven to punish those who would not believe. The great Church of Christ had erred. It had blasphemed against Luther. The co-heir with Christ had been excommunicated, and now the wrath of injured innocence must descend in flames of living fire. The Pope must be possessed of Satan and the accursed abode of Antichrist. The vials of wrath must be poured on the heads of those who could not believe as he believed. He must be considered infallible. He was professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg, and had studied the Scriptures with a deep understanding. It was not what the Apostle Peter had bequeathed to the Church, but what Martin Luther had concluded should be in it. He was to be the authority, the law, the gospel.

“ Luther’s terrible denunciation of the Catholic Church brought dangers to his person by infuriated men, and to avoid the penalty of imprisonment by disobedience to the State authority he was forced into retirement, and for a year was not known to the outside world. During this period he translated the

Bible into German, fitting it, as has been charged, to suit his own system of belief. When conscience reproached him he laid its torments to the persecutions of the devil. He was an incessant worker in his vineyard of reform. Now placed upon the defensive by being excommunicated, he opened his rapid-fire guns in almost ceaseless roar.

“It is not necessary to explain the fickle-mindedness of Luther. His letters and violent declarations are in complete opposition. To-day he declares the Church is the foundation of Antichrist, and to-morrow appeals to the Pope to come to the rescue of our Lord Jesus Christ. His mind was in one constant state of fear. In his passionate appeals to the people he goes to the extreme limit of persecution, and in the reaction he sues for mercy, comfort and consolation. Had these waverings of his own faith been known to his followers, the Reformation of Martin Luther might have never been.”

Mr. Craig, an unbaptized person, continues :

NOTE 4.—“To break monastic vows was regarded as a great wrong against the Church, against obedience, and against honor. But Luther determined to free the minds of others, if not his own, by a publication reflecting upon these vows as unholy, unchristian.

“Luther himself followed the course which he had urged others to take, and in the year 1525, at the age of forty-two years, and in defiance of his priestly and monastic vows, married a Cistercian nun, named Catherine von Bora. This act startled and surprised

Luther's friends, and even Erasmus, one of the greatest admirers of his opposition to the Roman Church, scoffingly writes: "This undertaking of Luther's appears to many a tragedy, but he himself must hold it for a comedy, as everything ends with a marriage."

"Luther was often asked by what right he had exalted himself over popes, bishops, councils, doctors and fathers, and set himself up as a reformer? If he had received a commission from God, why not prove it by the manifestation of miracles, or by signs and wonders, as apostles and prophets had done before him? While he did not respond to these questions, yet he commanded that others who were preaching a different reform theology from his must prove that they were commissioned by some miraculous power of God, or be condemned for heresy.

"To sustain his doctrine, he would change the passage so as to conform to his teachings. Thus for instance, in Romans iii. 28, he allowed himself to interpolate the word "alone" into the text, in order to support his doctrine that faith "alone" sufficed for justification. When this error was objected to, he replied: Should any Papist be wishing to get rid of that word "alone," tell him at once that Doctor Martin Luther will have it there, and he says, "A Papist is just the same thing as an ass."

Thus we find that Luther, in the translation of his Bible, did, in numerous places, change the real meaning so as to conform to his ideas of teaching. In his theology he believed that the exposition of Divine Truth should convey such and such impressions, and

in his exalted wisdom it was eminently proper to either drop out or interpolate words, according as it seemed to accord with his understanding.

NOTE 5.—“Among the most fiery and vehement opposers of Luther and his doctrine,” continues Mr. Craig, “was Henry VIII, King of England, who afterwards became the Pope’s bitterest foe. Henry, in writing to the Pope, declares that Luther must be punished for disobedience, heresy, and the desecration of God’s Holy Church. Measures must be taken to terminate the propagation of Lutheranism, which poisoned the mind and meant spiritual death. That Luther was possessed of the devil, and his teachings were more pernicious than were all the Turks, Saracens and unbelievers combined. By his urgent appeals to stamp out the heresy and punish the offender, Henry was given the title of “Defender of the Faith.”

The spread of Luther’s Reformation was not exactly in the line of his expectation and wishes. Other reformers appeared upon the field, and, in pointing out the errors of Luther, sought to establish a religion of their own. Prominent among these new prophets were Zwickau, John Calvin and Zwingli. Then followed subdivision after subdivision, until the number of denominations and churches became greater and greater, and even to this day are being remodeled, revamped, and placed on new foundations of faith.

A new feature now arises upon the horizon of the fame of Luther and his co-laborers in the field of reformation. The peasant people were everywhere being aroused against popes, princes, nobility, wealth,

religion, and all society. They were having too much agitation, too much controversy, too much religion. Luther had broken the restraints placed upon them by the Catholic Church, and the wild terrors of war were soon raging. This war is known in history as "The Peasants' War." The peasants were aroused to madness by the oppression of their feudal lords, and through the religious excitement that filled the air they saw their wrongs multiplied, their oppression intensified and their way made clear to open revolt. They saw Luther denounce the Pope, denounce the Church, and denounce their mode of worship. They saw and felt these influences; and, having broken their allegiance to the Church of Rome, were beyond restraint. Their ravages were most terrible and destructive. They reviled priests, sacked and burned castles and monasteries, destroyed images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, jeered at the worship of God, committed desperate crimes against women and children, and in the mad frenzy of uncontrolled rage they equalled the Reign of Terror in the days of Robespierre. For nearly a year this desperate carnage of death, fire and destruction swept the provinces of Germany. During this period of Reformation nearly one hundred thousand lives had been sacrificed, a large part of Southern Germany made desolate, and the peasants distracted in religion, faith and truth. They had been conquered, but were embittered against God and man. The quiet of previous years had been turned into anarchy, bloodshed and ruin. The gospel of Christ was reviled, hated and trampled upon, and although

Luther professed horror at the terrible strife, yet many of his religious co-partners were leaders in this great insurrection. History asserts that this war was instituted for the purpose of destroying the Church of Rome, persecuting Catholics, and establishing a reform government in both Church and State, and in this charge Martin Luther is held responsible just in proportion as his influence stirred the people from a peaceful submission to becoming the outlawed rebels of the empire.

After this rebellion another attempt was made by the Church of Rome to pacify the provinces of Germany and establish mutual relations between them and the Pope. The Second Diet of Spire was called to discuss the matter, and to seek an understanding, if possible. This body issued an order to all Catholics, and to all the people, not to promote the spread of these new doctrines until there had been a thorough examination of the various forms and principles of worship and a decision made in regard to them. But the revolt of seven of the German princes and a large number of cities in the empire was the final downfall of the direct influence of the Roman Church in these provinces. Those in opposition to the edict of the Second Diet of Spire issued a formal *protest* against the action of the Diet, and because of this *protest* the reformers were called from this time on by the name of Protestants.

From this revolt of Martin Luther, writes Mr. Craig, originated the long line of Protestant doctrines of worship. When once a people are divided in opinions there will arise a Babel of voices clam-

oring for this or that, for consideration, for expansion, for rejection, for issues of every character which the ingenuity of man can invent. So frail is man in his own power of understanding, that any creed, no matter how ridiculous, how ungodly in character, or how foreign to the light of reason, if presented with eloquence and apparent faith, will find its followers, and in proportion to the energy used to advance this thought or theory, so will this new doctrine expand, multiply, and become the law of men, States and nations.

It is Satan's scheme to first create discord, then division, then anarchy, then ruin. It is only by strength that progress, enlightenment and Christianity moves this world of motion. Destroy strength and you destroy the whole fabric of purpose, of light, of endurance and power. God ordained that law, order and obedience must be the groundwork of happiness. Without law there can be no security of life, no guarantee of purpose, and no protection of rights. Without order we have chaos and ruin. Without obedience it is one realm of mutiny, a storm-tossed ship without rudder or compass, a mob without leadership, an army without a general, and honesty without truth.

The Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ, and the Apostle Peter was its first visible head, and in these 2,000 years it has remained steadfast in its promotion of truth and Christianity. Nations have lived and died, and yet in all the varied changes of institutions, in all the expansion and contraction of governments, we find this Church at the beginning

and at the end. It is the Alpha and Omega, the first to preach the gospel of Christ, the first to lay down their lives in sustaining the true faith of God. And while they suffered death by ghastly brutal means, by fire and sword, by crucifixion, yet in all its persecution it grew brighter and brighter, its influence spread farther and farther, until the whole world seemed to yield to Christian power.

Such is the history of the Catholic Church, and while paganism sought to persecute it out of existence, yet in the hands of God this persecution was but the means of perfecting its strength, its power and its glory. And while Martin Luther sought to tear down its foundation of principles and build upon its fallen structure the story of Reformation, yet it passes through these years of assault, freed from the dross of indulgence, of conspiracy, and of jealous power. Not once in its long line of triumphs and adversity has the Church been made weaker in its defense, less devout in its teachings, or less dim in its splendor, but ever rises, purer in purpose, more stable in discipline, and more grand in the development of Christian love and forbearance."

NOTE 6.—THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

From Mr. Craig, not a Catholic:

As has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, this "Thirty Years' War" was the last great combat between Protestants and Catholics in Europe. It was the most disastrous conflict since the beginning of the Christian Era. History informs us that its effect upon Germany alone was beyond calculation;

that it is impossible to give expression to its wretchedness, its devastation of cities, homes and country. In 1618, the date of the commencement of this struggle, Germany had a population of 30,000,000; at its close, in 1648, it numbered less than 12,000,000. No one can comprehend this terrible destruction of life and property. Many of the most flourishing cities were almost completely destroyed, and commerce, trade and industries ruined. The magnificent city of Berlin was reduced to a few hundred destitute and starving people. The duchy of Wurtemberg could scarcely number 50,000 individuals, where before there flourished more than half a million. The ruins of the homes of peasants were on every hand—on all sides was despair and desolation. The country was literally a blackened waste of war's destruction. No enterprise, no trade, no commerce, nothing of the arts, sciences, or learning. Education was entirely neglected, except the education for war. Children were born and grew to manhood with the cry of Reformation on their lips, with the denunciation of all things Catholic in their hearts, and with war as the only aim of life. It was the most barbaric age of German existence. Moral law was lost in the forgetfulness of duty to mankind. Vice, nourished by the impure atmosphere of constant camp life, had full sway; licentiousness ruled supreme. Cities that erstwhile had spread renown with their paintings and sculptures now lay in ruins and neglect. "In character, in intelligence and in morality the German people were set back two hundred years."

The followers of Martin Luther may declare that

this awful calamity was the work of Catholics and of Catholic inception, but in this they are much mistaken. It was a conflict almost directly traceable to Protestant revolt from the Roman Church, and we find that the spirit of conquest and political aspirations entered largely into it. But construe it as we may, it was the termination of the great religious revolt, or Reformation, begun by Martin Luther, Ulric Zwingli and John Calvin."

CHAPTER IX.

ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

From Mr. A. H. Craig, not a Catholic:

The origin of the Church of England is known to all students of history, and may be summarized as follows:

1. Henry VIII, of England, desired to obtain a divorce from his wife, Catherine of Aragon, and thus be free to marry Anne Boleyn, a beautiful and vivacious maid of honor in the queen's household.

2. The king petitioned Pope Clement VII to grant a suspension of Church authority and allow the divorce and second marriage.

3. The Pope refused to grant the request.

4. Henry, being highly indignant at the Pope's refusal to violate the sacred tenets of marriage vows, declared himself Supreme Head of the English Catholics and compelled the clergy to recognize him as such.

5. Thomas Cranmer was promoted to the office of Archbishop of Canterbury, who, being a servile follower of the king, pronounced the marriage with Catherine invalid, and the one the king had already secretly contracted with Anne Boleyn to be lawful.

6. On March 23, 1534, the Pope cancelled this decision, which brought a complete rupture between the Pope and Henry.

7. The same year the Pope excommunicated

Henry and relieved his subjects from their allegiance to him.

8. Persecution of Catholics by Henry and the establishment of the English Church.

At the time of the beginning of this chapter the people of England were devout Catholics. So earnest was Henry VIII in his zeal that Leo X, in 1521, rewarded him with the title of "Defender of the Faith." At this time Martin Luther, an apostate monk, attempted to spread his new religion by scattering broadcast among the people his articles of faith and reasons for denouncing the Catholic Church. Henry was highly indignant at his audacity, and wrote articles strongly denouncing Luther for his religious opposition. For his earnest labors in condemning Martin Luther he was rewarded by this special title, but, strange to say, this most zealous of Christians afterwards became the bitterest enemy of the Catholic Church. From our standpoint of to-day it is hard to see how an earnest Christian can forsake his Church and become its enemy, but when we consider the make-up of the man, his wilful and impetuous disposition, and his selfish propensities, we need not wonder at his traitorous conduct.

The reason for this sudden denunciation of faith was not one of conscience, but one of a licentious and political nature. Henry's marriage with Catherine had been prompted by policy and not by love. Five children had been born, but all had died except a daughter named Mary, who was in delicate health and might not reach womanhood, thus cutting off any direct heirship to his throne. Considering this

question, and having become infatuated with the beauty and brilliancy of Anne Boleyn, he determined to secure a divorce from Catherine and take Anne as his wife. Knowing that divorces were not permitted by the Catholic Church, he sought to evade the marriage law on the grounds of illegality, and petitioned the Pope to annul it. This the Pope refused to do, and by the advice of Thomas Cromwell, a servile follower of the king, Henry decided to appoint Cranmer, a Cambridge doctor, who supported him by publishing articles in favor of the divorce, to the high position of Archbishop of Canterbury. This new bishop immediately established a court, tried the case, and, of course, decided that the first marriage was not lawful because Catherine was the widow of his brother. The bishop also decided that the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn, though secret, was legal and in harmony with the Church.

The Pope immediately excommunicated Henry, who determined on revenge and called Parliament, who, not daring to thwart the wishes of the king, passed the act of Supremacy, which conferred upon Henry the absolute control of the various departments of the Church in England. By this act he was to be recognized as the Supreme Head, given control of its offices and revenues. In order to completely establish himself as the Supreme Head, an act was passed making a denial of this title as high treason. Henry was now given, not only the control of the Church, but the power to condemn to death anyone who might deny his right. This was indeed a

most lamentable position for the Catholics to occupy. To protest against the law was treason, and to respect it was against their teachings of faith, but we must not censure these people too severely for yielding to the terrible declaration of the law. They were allowed to worship, but it must be in accordance with law.

By the enactment of this statute the Church was completely severed from the Roman See. Catholics were, under penalty of death, obliged to worship under the new dispensation, which became the Established Church of England. Thus we have a condensed history of how and why this Church came into existence, and we will now briefly recite some of the persecutions which followed.

King Henry had now established a little Popedom of his own invention, without divine authority, and in hostile opposition to all laws, edicts and commands of the Catholic Church. He had declared himself greater than the Pope, and under the laws passed by his dictation he was dictator of how people should worship, what should be their belief, and what should be condemned. Among the doctrines he condemned were holy pilgrimages, belief in purgatory, representations of Christ and the Holy Virgin, historic relics, convents, monasteries, penance, and all forms of Pope authority. In the suppression of monasteries and convents it was a complete confiscation of all property, and if there was even murmuring at his unjust and high-handed acts, they were convicted of treason and executed. The executioner's axe was constantly wet with the blood of all those who opposed

his authority, or in any way incurred his displeasure. He required the head of every family and teachers of schools to teach the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the new creed. But, strange to say, Henry commanded, under penalty of death, an observance of the main tenets of the Catholic dogma, which were: Transubstantiation, Communion, Celibacy of the clergy, Vows, Mass for the dead, and auricular confession. By sustaining these articles of faith many Catholics were made contented, not knowing nor realizing the conflict between Henry and the Church of Rome.

In the confiscation of property nearly one-fifth of the lands of the kingdom belonged to the Church, which was turned to the control of the king, who disposed of it to the greatest advantage to himself. He founded schools and colleges; established incomes for the support of churches and bishoprics; made donations to officers and favorites, but the greater portion was distributed among those whose influence was necessary to sustain him in his new position. By this wholesale disposition of property vast estates were established which created a powerful English aristocracy, which to-day is in existence and can be traced to this origin. Thus was the English Church and its most devoted followers financially rewarded by the self-appointed Supreme Head. To call this new Creed Protestant would be an injustice to the orthodox belief, and to call it Catholic would be an insult to the Church of Rome, who denied the illegal marriage, who refused to violate the laws of marriage,

and who excommunicated their Supreme Head for this violation.

The extent of confiscation may be realized when history informs us that, altogether, there were 90 colleges, 110 hospitals, 2,374 chantries and chapels, 645 monasteries and 540 convents broken up and the property given to advance the cause of the new Church and the popularity of Henry himself. The establishment of lands for the benefit of churches was a move to place the new church upon a solid financial foundation, for in all ages, money, lands, wealth, is a great physician in easing the consciences of men. Henry was the physician and the confiscated property the prescription that gave life, strength and ambition to the Church of England.

If this only had been the record of Henry VIII, we might view his acts as those of ambition, but his apostasy, denunciation, confiscation and bribery pale beneath the malignant persecution of Catholics. Nero was always a pagan, and knew nothing of Christianity, but Henry was raised a Catholic, worshipped a Catholic, defended the faith as a Catholic, but to gratify his lust, his power and his ambition, he became one of the greatest apostates the world ever saw. His only excuse was his passions. He had no cause to denounce, no religion to disagree with, and no philosophy to advance. His denunciations were the most corrupt, vicious, immoral and depraved that have been recorded in the pages of English history. When we speak of the atrocious crimes which he committed against his subjects we shudder at his wickedness. The illustrious Sir Thomas More, the

venerable Bishop Fisher, and others, became victims of execution. Also, we find recorded that he ordered the execution of two queens, two cardinals, two archbishops, eighteen bishops, thirteen abbots, five hundred priors and monks, thirty-eight doctors of divinity and laws, one hundred and twenty-four commoners, sixty-four gentlemen, twelve dukes and earls, and one hundred and ten ladies of rank, and all because their conscience would not allow them to denounce their worship and become apostates to the Catholic Church. They refused to recognize the king as the Supreme Head of the Church, and laid down their lives as a sacrifice to their fidelity to truth, honor and Christian faith.

Besides this, we find in his own household a history as monstrous as the history of his Christian apostasy. To expose his private life is to write a disgraceful page in the history of the kings of England. After disposing of Catherine of Aragon by a forced divorce, he marries the beautiful and accomplished Anne Boleyn, but, tiring of her, he issues a charge of unworthiness and she is executed by his own order. The next day after the execution of Anne he married Jane Seymour, who died the following year. His fourth wife was Anne of Cleves, who was cast aside on the grounds of a previous betrothal, and Catherine Howard became the next victim to his shameful lust and cruelty. Like Anne Boleyn, she was executed at his command, and gave room for his sixth wife, Catherine Parr, who was a discreet woman, and by tact and wisdom managed to retain his respect and survived his death.

This tyrant died in 1547, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign. And now, as we look back to his history and see the inconsistency of his request to Pope Clement VII, and the villainy of outraged decency, criminal responsibility, and the desecration of God's holy command, we can have only loathing and disgust for his memory. He lived a life of depravity and disgrace; a life of murderous sin; a life of blasphemous shame; a life devoid of every Christian principle, every Christian form of reverence, and every Christian virtue. And yet society glories in his existence, and glories in its long line of ancestry. He established a nobility on the ruins of confiscation, rapine and murder. He executed queens, nobles and illustrious men. He desecrated churches, schools, colleges, and burned their sacred vestments. He bribed ministers of the gospel, prostituted Parliament, established his own courts, villified God and served Satan in all the wickedness of thought, deed and action.

Few men in the world's history can carry the record of Henry VIII. His triumphs through disgrace are a long line of wicked villainy, and without one act to commend, he stands, a monument to himself, a mass of sickening sensuality, of honest loathing, and of beastly triumph.—*Christian Persecutions*, by A. H. Craig, not a Catholic.

ELOQUENT TRIBUTE FROM LORD MACAULAY, A
PROTESTANT HISTORIAN.

“There is not, and there never was on this earth,

a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustin, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Atilla. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn, countries which, a century hence, may not improbably contain a population as large as

that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her communion are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it will be difficult to show that all the other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments which now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

CHAPTER X.

Private Judgment and the Pope's Infallibility.

(Editorial in "Freeman's Journal," July 13, 1907.)

A WORD or two about the Bible and its relation to the Church.

Christian Advocate: "The judgment of the Pope is to them (Catholics) the supreme authority. Higher even than that of the Bible."

We have spoken before about the sophism in the use of the word judgment. The Pope's private judgment does not constitute a doctrine of faith. The doctrine of the Church is that the Pope's official, ex-cathedra utterances, on questions of faith and morals, are infallible. We have nothing to do with the Pope's private opinion or judgment. It is with his public, formal and official utterances, as head of the Church, that we have to do; and in this case his voice is the voice of the teaching Church.

The question then is reduced to this: What relation do the Church of Christ and the revelations of Christ through the writers inspired by Him bear to each other?

It is a historical fact that the Church of Christ existed and was in the full performance of her divine commission before a word of the New Testament was written. She had directly from her divine Founder all authority necessary to make her

competent to accomplish her mission. She was in full exercise of this authority before any of the writers of the New Testament put pen to parchment. She was known and her authority recognized before a word of her origin and history was recorded in writing; known to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Hebrews, the Thessalonians, and to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon, before St. Paul wrote his Epistles to any of these, and before any of the Gospels were written. She was known to all of these and to others, not by the New Testament, which did not exist, but by the preaching of her ministers. St. Paul wrote his Epistles to those who were already members of the Church, and the Gospels were written for the members of the Church. The Church therefore had been doing her work, accomplishing her mission, independently of the New Testament. She was in full possession of the deposit of revealed truth and law, as their guardian and interpreter, a divine organization having our Lord's solemn assurance that she would continue to the end of the world. The writers of the New Testament were ministers within her fold, who recorded what the Church had received from her divine Founder during His ministry on earth. The revealed truths and laws in their writings were in possession of the Church before they were made a matter of record. They were received by the Church and were included in her commission, "Go teach all nations . . . *whatsoever I have commanded you*, and lo, I am with you

all days." It is for this reason and in this sense St. Paul, in his letter to Bishop Timothy of Ephesus, called the Church "the House of God . . . the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists were the possessions of the Church, the teachings of her ministers who were inspired to put them on record. And she, being the Church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of the truth, was and is their interpreter, their sole interpreter, as our Supreme Court is the sole interpreter of our Constitution—the former by divine appointment, and the latter by human appointment. It is for this reason that our Lord declared, "He that will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

In what we have said the relation between the Church of Christ and the Bible becomes manifest. It is not a relation of superiority and inferiority, but that of a divine institution and her recorded teaching through her first ministers, the writers of the New Testament.

The Church is older than the record, though contemporary with the revelation of the truths and laws contained in the record. Her existence and authority are consequently independent of the record; that is, of the New Testament. She did not receive her existence and her authority from that book, since she existed and exercised her authority, and governed the faithful, before it was written.

It was the Church that identified the books of the

New Testament, distinguished them from the many apocryphal books existing in the early ages, and authoritatively affirmed their divine inspiration. It was owing to this fact that they were received throughout the Christian world as the word of God.

Protestantism, in rejecting the authority of the Church, deprived itself of the power of proving the divine character of the books of both the Old and the New Testaments, as the Church of Christ is the only competent witness to their inspiration.

In dealing with these books Protestants recognize no authority but their own private judgment. How then do they know that the books are inspired, since inspiration is a thing that comes not under the apprehension of the five senses, and consequently cannot come to the knowledge of man by any other means save that of authority? And nothing less than divine infallible authority is sufficient as a basis of faith.

If the Christian Advocate would undertake to prove to the infidel or the heathen the inspiration of the Bible, and do it by means of his private judgment alone, he would find before him a task that would occupy and exhaust in vain all his ability, and leave no energy to devote to the Catholic Church and her head.

If the heathen or the infidel were to ask him the question, How do you know that the Bible is inspired? what would or could he answer?

Would he say, The Bible says it is inspired? He would be told that the Bible says no such thing. And

even if it did say it, its *say* would be of no value until the inspiration of that *say* is itself proved. He would be told that to prove the inspiration of the Bible by the Bible itself involves what logicians call a vicious circle, which is equivalent to the attempt of a man to lift himself from the ground by pulling at his own boot straps. He would be further and correctly told that his vicious circle argument is not worthy of one gifted with the faculty of reasoning.

What further would he urge? Would he say, The Bible teaches a sublime and beautiful morality, and therefore it is inspired? He would be told that many uninspired books teach a sublime and beautiful morality, and that consequently such teaching is not a proof of inspiration. He would be further told that his idea of morality is taken from the Bible, as that of the Mahomedan is taken from the Koran, and that of the Mormon from the Book of Mormon. And that both these latter argue the inspiration of their books by reference to their sublime and beautiful morality, according to their conception of it. Of course you will see that this argument in behalf of the Koran and the Book of Mormon is not valid, and that it is equally invalid in proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

Will you further urge that the Jews believed in the inspiration of the Old Testament and the early Christians believed in that of the New?

The infidel would say in reply: You undertook to prove the inspiration of the Bible by appeal to your own private judgment. You now abandon that Pro-

testant position and appeal to the authority of the Jews and early Christians. Do you believe the inspiration of the Bible on their authority? If so, you reject your fundamental Protestant principle of private judgment, and adopt the Catholic principle of some authority other than private judgment.

Thus, instead of converting the infidel, or the heathen to your belief, he drives you to abandon your private judgment and to appeal for your belief to the authority of others. He compels you to sacrifice your Protestant principle of private judgment, or sacrifice your belief in the inspiration of the Bible; and, if you still persist in believing, you do it at the sacrifice of logic, and your belief is not Christian faith, but credulity. True Christian faith is both rational and logical.

The Bible must have a divinely authorized and commissioned witness to its inspiration, or its authority as a revelation cannot be established. There is such a divinely authorized witness in the world, and has been since our Lord established His Church. He created her to be an infallible witness, an ever living witness through the ages, to His revealed truth in all its contents and circumference. Without this infallible witness there can be no certainty, no faith. Faith is a sine-qua-non condition to salvation. Hence the necessity, and therefore the existence of the infallible witness. In all the world there is but one Church that claims this infallibility. It is the Catholic Church. There is no adverse claimant. She is therefore the infallible witness.

**LIST OF USEFUL BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS
ON THIS AND KINDRED SUBJECTS.
THESE CAN BE PROCURED
THROUGH ANY BOOK
DEALER**

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS. By Cardinal Gibbons.
**SHORT ANSWERS TO POPULAR OBJECTIONS AGAINST
RELIGION.** Segur.

SIX LECTURES ON GHOSTS. By Rev. P. C. Yorke.

WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS? By Rev. P. J. Danehy.

WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC. By Hon. Henry C. Dillon.

This is an outline of the reasons which led Mr. Dillon, a prominent lawyer of Los Angeles, to become a Catholic.

CATHOLICISM AND REASON. By Hon. Henry C. Dillon.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By Rev. R. F. Clarke, S. J.

**WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS, AND WHAT SHE
TEACHES.** By Ernest R. Hull, S. J.

THE BIBLE AND THE REFORMATION. By C. F. B. Allnatt.

THE POPE: HOW FAR DOES HE CONTROL CONSCIENCE?

**HOW FAR DOES HE INTERFERE WITH CITIZEN-
SHIP?** 200 pages.

WHAT CATHOLICS DO NOT BELIEVE. By Most Rev. P. J.
Ryan, D. D.

A most eloquent and masterly discourse on the subject of Catholic doctrine. Though specially intended for non-Catholics, it cannot fail to instruct and edify Catholics. In his introduction the Archbishop says: "I have given to this lecture the title, 'What Catholics Do Not Believe,' because its primary object is to remove certain prejudices against the Church founded on what 'we do not believe.' The positive side of the question—what we do really believe on these points—will be found stated in every instance, in replying to objections."

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? By Rev. C. Van de Ven. 23 pages.

Some plain questions and answers about the true religion. A pamphlet very useful to point out to an inquiring mind the way to the Church.

THE VOICE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD. DOES IT LIVE?

AND WHERE? By Rev. Edmund Hill, C. P. 25 pages.

THE REASONS FOR WHAT I BELIEVE. By Cardinal Manning.

PLAIN FACTS FOR FAIR MINDS. By Rev. George M. Searle,
Paulist.

THE HOLY GHOST AND THE CHURCH. By Cardinal
Manning.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RELIGION.

From the Creation of the World to the Present Time.

CONFESSION TO A PRIEST. By Rev. W. H. Anderson, S. J.

1—What it is not. 2—What it does to society. 3—What to
the individual.

WHERE IS THE CHURCH? By Rev. C. Coupe, S. J.

THE RELIGION OF A TRAVELER. By Cardinal Manning.
76 pages.

This is accounted to be one of the best bits of controversial literature in English—Clear, trenchant and masterly, as was the mind of the author.

WHY I AM A CATHOLIC. By Rev. C. A. Ramm.

INDIFFERENTISM. By Rev. Charles Coupe, S. J.

A protest against the spirit of the age, which is declared to be one of lawless liberalism in religion, and a tendency to minimize the importance of dogma and principle. The popular theory that if a man is upright and attends to the ordinary duties of life, it matters not what creed he holds, is shown to be fallacious.

CHURCH OR BIBLE. By Rev. Arnold Damen, S. J.

Who has not heard of Father Damen, the Jesuit missionary? It is conservatively estimated that he received ten thousand converts into the Church during his fifty years of missionary labor. The above pamphlet summarizes his arguments which awakened those souls to serious thought, showed them how unstable was the foundation upon which they were building.

WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC. By Horace E. Chapman, M. A.
JOSEPH SLATTERY: THE ROMANCE OF AN UNFROCKED PRIEST.

MRS. SLATTERY: THE ROMANCE OF A SHAM NUN.
By Rev. H. W. Cleary.

THE PROTESTANT RULE OF FAITH AN IMPOSSIBLE ONE. By Monsignor John S. Vaughan.

HENRY VIII. AND THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES. By Cardinal Manning.

REASONS FOR BEING A CATHOLIC. By E. H.

HOW TO SEEK FOR THE TRUE CHURCH. By Mgr. John S. Vaughan.

WHERE IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

WHY I LEFT THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. By James Britten, Hon. Sec. Catholic Truth Society.

THE AWFUL DISCLOSURES OF MARIA MONK.

THE INQUIRER'S CATECHISM. "Lead, Kindly Light."

MODERN RELIGIOUS SKEPTICISM. By Most Rev. P. J. Ryan, D. D.

THE REAL PRESENCE. By Rev. C. F. Smarius, S. J.

IS THERE SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. By Mgr. Vaughan.

No truth of the Catholic faith is more repugnant to those outside the fold than the well-known dictum, "Outside the Church there is no salvation." If, however, this brochure of Mgr. Vaughan would be widely read, this prejudice would vanish.

UNBELIEF A SIN. By the Rev. Edmund Hill, C. P. 16 pages.

FAITH AND REASON. By Rev. Bernard Vaughan, S. J.

THOUGHTS FOR ALL TIMES. By Mgr. John S. Vaughan.

JESUS OF NAZARETH; THE STORY OF HIS LIFE. By Mother Loyola.

Jesus of Nazareth

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

WRITTEN FOR CHILDREN

By MOTHER MARY LOYOLA

"The book is eminently adapted to strengthen faith in Our Lord's Divinity and to draw to Him the hearts of children. I most willingly recommend the book to Christian parents. They will find it most useful in the difficult task of training their children in the fear and love of God."—*Most Rev. D. Falconio, Apostolic Delegate.*

"The book is eminently practical, simple, unctuous and interesting. It will make a powerful impression on the minds of children. In fact, no one can read it without loving God more, and therefore becoming better."—*Cardinal Gibbons.*

"I have read it through, and am pleased to recommend it to all our people. It is one of the most attractive Lives of Our Blessed Lord I have met, especially for young people."—*Archbishop Farley.*

"I have gone through it from cover to cover, and in closing the book to-night my first act is to tell how much I would desire to see it in the hands of our Catholic people as a treasure-trove of their homes."—*Bishop Beaven.*

ALL CATHOLIC DEALERS